

# NORTH KOREAN JOURNEY

## The Revolution Against Colonialism

by Fred J. Carrier



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## **ERRATA**

Page 88, line 14 from bottom:  
the name of the President of the  
DPRK should read "Kim Il Sung".

Page 95, line 10 from bottom:  
the fourth word from the right  
margin should read "carrying".



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**INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHERS New York**

## CONTENTS

List of Illustrations	7
Foreword	9
Preface	17
1 / The Struggle Against a Colonial Economy	23
2 / The Cultural Revolution	49
3 / A Society of Workers	71
4 / National Independence and Reunification	89

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First Edition, 1975

Printed in the United States of America

### **Library of Congress Cataloging in Publishing Data**

Carrier, Fred J      1936-  
North Korean Journey.

Includes bibliographical references.

1. Korea (Democratic People's Republic)—  
Description and travel. I. Title.  
DS932.C34      915.19'3'0443      75-30829  
ISBN 0-7178-0444-5



## ILLUSTRATIONS

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MAPS	Korea	22
	Industries and Railroads	39
PHOTOGRAPHS	The author with his Korean hosts	19
	President Kim Il Sung	29
	Pyongyang: then and now	30
	Industry of north Korea	40
	In the countryside	41
	Cultural revolution and education	67
	Co-ordinating talks	119
TABLES	1. Index of Industrial Productivity	37
	2. Industrial Growth of Selected Items	38
	3. Disposition of Expropriated Land	43
	4. Establishment of Cooperative Farming	43
	5. Monthly Budget of a Family	82

## FOREWORD

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Professor Fred J. Carrier, who is co-chairman of the American-Korean Friendship and Information Center and who teaches in the Department of History of Villanova University, has written a unique, useful, and important book.

His work is unique in the sense that, to my knowledge, there is nothing like it written by a U.S. author for American readers. His book is about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)—a land and a people unknown to the great mass of Americans. The DPRK is a legitimate and prospering socialist nation which resisted and survived the U.S. war of aggression in Korea more than 20 years ago, and which continues to develop in spite of the U.S.-maintained split of the country into two parts and the attempted isolation of the DPRK by U.S. imperialism.



Dr. Carrier's work is also unique in the sense that as the product of a professional historian, it presents concrete details of the life, thought, and daily activities of the people of the DPRK in an account based on his direct observations during a visit there in 1973. Interwoven with these recorded observations are a number of significant figures about the progress of the people and an illuminating commentary on the meaning of this socialist achievement in an Asian country with a long and rich history. There is nothing like this account in print in this country.

The importance of this book will be plain to anyone who reads it appreciatively. The Korean war—a war which the U.S. Congress never had the courage to debate or declare—was initiated in 1950 by President Truman and the ruling groups behind him as a military, economic, and political drive on the part of American imperialism to contain the People's Republic of China, abort national liberation movements and newly emerging socialist nations in Asia, and establish spheres of domination there. As P.M.S. Blackett has well documented, the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima was the opening blow in the cold war of U.S. state monopoly capitalism against world communism. The occupation of Japan by U.S. armed forces and the subsequent placement of air force and nuclear bases there gave U.S. imperialism an unprecedented foothold in Asia. The brutal U.S. devastation of north Korea was an enterprise doomed to failure. Yet imperialists do not often learn from their mistakes. This failure to halt a people's liberation movement was doomed to be tragically repeated in the later American genocide in Vietnam and the rest of Indochina. Thus during the post-war period the goals of American foreign policy have remained the same: to extend the power and profit of U.S.

state monopoly capitalism and to smash all movements aiming at the people's liberation from the oppression of landlords and capitalists. If anyone doubts this, he is urged to weigh and consider the facts and figures of Chapter 4 of this book.

Thus Dr. Carrier's study is a most needed contribution to the education of the American people on a very important event in their history, the Korean war, as well as on the events that have ensued from that war to the present day. The single most important tragedy today in that train of events is the division of the land and people of Korea into two Koreas. This is an unjustified and intolerable fact—intolerable for most of the 50 million Koreans, in both north and south, and intolerable for those among the American people who are informed by the basic facts concerning their government's guilt for the war and the division, and who are imbued with a sense of justice.

I can speak with some warranted feeling on this subject, if I may say so, since with a delegation of the American-Korean Friendship and Information Center, I accepted an invitation to visit the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the summer of 1971. There I saw and heard evidence of American imperialism's inhumanity and destruction—the saturation bombing of whole cities, the burning alive and torturing of thousands of women and children, and germ warfare. No less, I saw and heard evidence of the heroic resistance of the Korean people to this inhumanity, as well as their devoted labors in reconstructing their countryside and cities along the lines of a sane, healthy, peaceful, independent, socialist order. Professor Carrier, in my judgment, does not exaggerate when he writes of the material achievements and the spiritual dedication and happiness of the people of the DPRK.



The principal U.S. organization now striving to bring the facts of the Korean war and the Korean division to the American people, and struggling to enlist support for the cause of Korean reunification by the independent, peaceful efforts of the Korean people themselves, is the American-Korean Friendship and Information Center (AKFIC).

Arising from the needs of the U.S. people's struggle for peace, a coalition of anti-imperialist forces, communists and non-communists, initiated the establishment of this Center and brought it into being in 1971. Thanks to the unflagging efforts of Joe Brandt, executive director of AKFIC, and editor of *Korea Focus*, the Center continued its activities. The sponsors of the Center number more than 100 persons from the ranks of labor, the professions, education, the arts, and other fields of work. Since the beginning, our purpose has been twofold: (1) to inform the American public of the facts concerning conditions in both north and south Korea, and of the United States' involvement in that area; and (2) to rally the American public behind a demand for a genuine pull-out of all U.S. military personnel and material, and for an end to all military assistance to the government of south Korea. To this end we have published and distributed leaflets, participated in anti-war marches, conducted symposia at colleges and universities, published a position paper, shown movies from the DPRK, and issued a journal.

While the individual sponsors of AKFIC hold differing political viewpoints, we are all unalterably opposed to imperialism and oppressive militarism in whatever form they appear. We are especially critical of the imperialism of the U.S. military-industrial-political complex as manifest in Korea, Indochina, and other parts of the world, and of a revised and dangerous Japanese imperialism in-

creasingly making itself felt in south Korea. We cannot forget the long history of Korea's subjugation to colonial powers, beginning with American gunboat diplomacy a century ago and followed by the Japanese occupation early in this century.

AKFIC's journal, *Korea Focus*, started in 1972, is published periodically and contains valuable factual materials and analyses bearing on the work of north-south division and reunification. It is a useful ideological arsenal, we believe, for combatting the cold war ignorance, prejudice, racism, and indifference that prevail among so many American leaders and in the establishment media. The truths that we endeavor to discover and disseminate through AKFIC are not idly pursued and put forward. They are intended to be tools whereby the American people can liberate themselves from the lies told them by their government about the Korean war and the Korean situation. Such truths are intended to be weapons for fighting the folly and ignorance spread by the ruling class, an ignorance and folly which are invariably the allies of oppression. Professor Carrier's book makes a notable contribution to these weapons for fighting imperialism and upholding liberation.

It is time for the people of the United States to come face to face with the brute facts and the brazen immorality of its government's actions in Korea. Under the most ancient and elementary of human principles, the territory collectively occupied, used, protected, and improved by the social group on it belongs to that social group. Modern democratic theory, including that of the United States, confers on the people of a territory the ultimate sovereignty over their affairs and their government.

The land and wealth of the territory of Korea belongs to the Korean people as a unit—not to a tiny clique of self-serving parasites in Seoul, not to the Pentagon-



state-monopoly complex in the United States, and not to an interlocking directorate of the two. All international law agrees furthermore on the principle that nations without just cause shall not infringe upon the sovereignty of other nations. Thus the United Nations Charter (Article 2, Section 4) states: "All members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purpose of the United Nations." Is it not clear to a reasoning mankind that the United States intervention in and occupation and splitting of Korea is a long standing violation of this principle that forbids forceful intervention by one state into another? By what legal or moral right does the government of the United States maintain 42,000 troops and a tremendous stockpile of weapons on Korean soil? By none whatsoever. This intervention is a flagrant infringement on the sovereignty of the Korean people over their own land and their own political unity.

The monstrous crime of U.S. military intervention in Korea in 1950 and the consequent partition of the country, enforced by U.S. armed might and cold war intransigence, must be exposed. The destruction of the war of intervention cannot be undone, but the cruel partition can be abolished. So far as they have been silent, indifferent, acquiescent, or supportive toward their government's intervention in and occupation of Korea, the American people have been responsible for this continuing crime of their government against the Korean people. For that crime was instigated with our passive consent, and it has been subsidized and perpetuated with billions of our tax dollars. It is our government, our money, and hence our responsibility for permitting or wiping away once and for all this attempted strangulation of a nation.

The new spirit of detente in the world demands that this vestige of the vicious days of a blind crusade against communism, this occupation of a foreign land by American troops to prop up a bankrupt dictator be eliminated. Let us respect the sovereignty and independence of the Korean people and nation. Let us remove the American sword from her middle, so that this long-standing wound, this bleeding 38th parallel, can be healed and dissolved in the unity of the Korean people themselves. Let us leave Korea, lock, stock, and barrel. Let us leave Korea to the Koreans. And when they have secured their reunification in their own independent and peaceful way, let us as a nation take up a new relation with the Korean people, a relation of peaceful coexistence—of mutual understanding, mutual respect, and mutual benefit.

Professor Howard Parsons  
*University of Bridgeport*

## PREFACE

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Long before I went to Korea I had learned that her people, engaged in a socialist revolution, were rapidly constructing an industrial democratic society in the north of that country. But like most people I wanted to see for myself, and so when the opportunity came in 1973 I was elated. My journey to Korea commenced the evening of June 13 as part of a three-man delegation from the American-Korean Friendship and Information Center. We were a very disparate threesome both in personality and political perspective, except that we all rejected imperialism in its entirety. Joe Brandt was the dean of the delegation. His long activity in the Communist Party's struggle for socialism dates back to his participation in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade when he fought fascism in Spain and through World War II when he fought fascism again. He had also visited People's Korea on two previ-



ous occasions. Robert Ante was the youngest of the group, a professor of economic geography with special interests in Mongolia and Korea, and with a hearty appetite for Asian food. I was a professor of modern history at Villanova University whose interest in the Third World had grown with the struggle against U.S. imperialism in Vietnam. As I learned more about what was happening in Vietnam during the years 1964-1973, I came to realize that Korea, like Vietnam, was part of the world socialist revolution and that the U.S. role was also a global one of thwarting the spread of socialism by massive air assaults, rending nations into two, erecting dictatorships in the name of democracy or the "Free World," and maintaining bases for imperialism in these capitalist satellites. It is this political awakening which forms the background to my journey.

When the American-Korean Center was formed in 1971, I was one of the founding sponsors along with Ante, while Brandt provided the spark that brought our anti-imperialist movement to life. Professor Howard Parsons was the chairman whose dedication is a continuing inspiration. Without the support of these men this book would not exist. It was Brandt's suggestion, made while we were in Pyongyang, that I write the book and he has given unstinted encouragement and guidance all along the way. Parsons labored over the first draft of the manuscript and made countless suggestions. I am also indebted to an earlier delegation led by Parsons which visited the DPRK in 1971 and whose findings appeared along with many other valuable articles in *Korea Focus*.

The purpose of AKFIC is to inform the American people of the United States' past and present misdeeds in Korea, and its maintenance of a capitalist dictatorship in South Korea backed by an American air-ground force stationed there, plus billions of dollars of military aid.



Joseph Brandt (2nd from left), Robert Ante (center rear) and Fred Carrier with their Korean hosts at Mongyongdae National Park. Choi Yong Gun, Vice-Chairman of the Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, is at the right.



What is of immense concern to us is that Korea might become a sequel to Vietnam if the liberation movement in the southern part of Korea poses the threat of success. Would the U.S. political and military leadership be able to resist the temptation of massive intervention, even after the bitter defeat of U.S. goals in Vietnam?

Since I was active in AKFIC, it came as a welcome surprise when the DPRK extended its invitation to us "to see for ourselves" what was happening there. After a four day stopover in Moscow, an exciting experience in itself, we boarded an Ilyushin 18 for a tiring 14-hour flight across the vast Soviet Union. The morning of June 19 we arrived at Pyongyang to begin a two week stay as guests of the Korean people, more specifically at the invitation of the Korean Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. We remained in Korea until July 3.

What this book proposes is, first, to render a short account of some of the fascinating experiences which helped me to better understand what is happening in Korea. I would like as many Americans as possible to share some of these events as well as the sense of friendship that grew out of my trip.

Second, I propose to supplement this first-hand account of socialist Korea with data about its economic growth and its cultural revolution, as well as enough facts about its history in order to place these changes in perspective.

All that I write is based on my experiences, my own reactions, and my own judgments. Although the members of our delegation shared much, we also differed on much. Nevertheless, our overall reaction was one of enthusiasm, confidence and firm support for the future of socialist Korea.

## **NORTH KOREAN JOURNEY**



# 1 THE STRUGGLE AGAINST A COLONIAL ECONOMY



Of all that we saw the most important on a world scale is the successful struggle being waged to change a colonial economy into an industrial one. By utilizing its natural resources and developing its technology to the point where it can equip new industry, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has brought to an end not only a feudal stage of its history but also a colonial stage. Only three decades ago Japan controlled Korea as a colony, fashioning its economy to serve the needs of an industrial Japan while keeping the colony "underdeveloped." All this has been smashed during a single generation of socialist revolution and in its stead exists a strong, independent, increasingly prosperous state. For the bulk of the Third World faced with neo-colonial conditions the Korean experience is of foremost interest.

How is it being done? What prospects does the Korean Revolution present for other countries?

The turning-over began at the end of World War II when the construction of a socialist economy was started in the northern part of Korea. Prior to 1945 Korea had been subjected to nearly half a century of Japanese exploitation. At the time when Manchu China was crumbling before Western imperialism, Japan took the opportunity to seize Korea, for a rapidly industrializing country could utilize colonies to support its own growth. By defeating China and then Russia, Japan established its colonial right over Korea, formally annexing the colony in 1910. During the Japanese occupation (1910-1945) the colonial purposes of the Korean economy were to provide raw materials for growing Japanese industry, to feed the urban workforce, and to permit high-return investment for capital. Banking and finance, as well as all large industry, were controlled by the Japanese.

Korean agriculture became an appendage to Japanese industrialization as Korea became one of the leading exporters of rice. Even in the southern part of the country where rice-growing is extensive, Koreans were required to eat barley and imported millet so that enough rice could be exported. Soybeans, cotton, fruits and raw silk were other important products supplied to Japan. The way in which the Japanese controlled agriculture was in part by direct theft and in part indirectly. Under the administration of the Oriental Colonization Society about 25 percent of the arable land was seized outright, thrusting many Korean peasants into the ranks of the proletariat.<sup>1</sup> All valuable forests or mining areas were also made available to Japanese capital for exploitation.

<sup>1</sup> Jean Suret-Canale, "Le développement économique de la république populaire démocratique de Corée," *Annales de Géographie*, No. 443 (Janvier-Février, 1972), pp. 50-51.

Under a Japanese governor-general a bureaucracy ruled Korea by decree, brutally enforced by the police. A new class of Japanese immigrants which grew to more than 700,000 by 1940 became the ruling class, occupying all the important positions of government, education, industry and commerce. It was the stated Japanese intent to "assimilate" Korea into Japan, to obliterate Korea as a nation (hence its name was changed to Chosen), and to force Koreans to speak Japanese. Only a small number of Korean landlords, comprador bourgeoisie,<sup>2</sup> and opportunists allied themselves to the colonial power. A Central Advisory Council of wealthy Koreans and a network of local advisory councils provided the facade of Korean participation in government, but in fact the bureaucracy was totally centralized under Japanese control.

Taxes were raised sharply on land, forcing many peasants to mortgage and then lose their land. A migration of impoverished Koreans into Manchuria occurred, so that a million Koreans were living there by the end of Japanese occupation. At the same time, land became more concentrated in the southern rice-growing areas where the plantation owners proved amenable to Japanese wishes. While rice production increased, it did not benefit the Korean people, for as much as half the crop was going to Japan by

<sup>2</sup> The term *comprador* is used to specify that part of the bourgeoisie whose profits and existence are tied to foreign control or colonialism. Thus, some Koreans were owners of large rice plantations profiting from exports to Japan; other bourgeoisie were allowed a share in mines or factories, again their profits coinciding with foreign capital; and some Koreans, of course, served in managerial roles for Japanese interest (what is called today "good public relations"). Such a *comprador* class supports continued foreign economic control or neo-colonialism, as distinct from the *national bourgeoisie* which stands to benefit from national independence. Needless to say the current regime at Seoul preserves the interests of the *comprador bourgeoisie*.



the 1930's at controlled prices which amounted to theft. Such terms of trade afforded the large landowners profits as long as they in turn exploited their own workers or tenants by low wages and high rents. In this way the comprador landlords served a puppet role, with Japanese industry calling the tune.

Some industrialization occurred under Japanese rule but a similar colonial pattern prevailed. Mining was the principal industry with Korea providing large supplies of coal and iron ore to Japanese industry. Japan was also totally dependent upon Korean mountains for its supply of magnesite, graphite, mica, cobalt and boron. Other industry included chemicals, lumber, metallurgy, textiles and food processing so that at the end of Japanese rule there were 421,000 industrial workers or about 5 percent of the workforce.<sup>3</sup> The predominant colonial character of this industry is indicated by the small proportion of complete manufacturing done in Korea. About 80 percent of all finished goods consumed in Korea had to be imported from Japan. Even the textile and food industries were to a large extent supplying the Japanese army rather than Korean consumers! In addition, industry was more than 95 percent Japanese-owned.

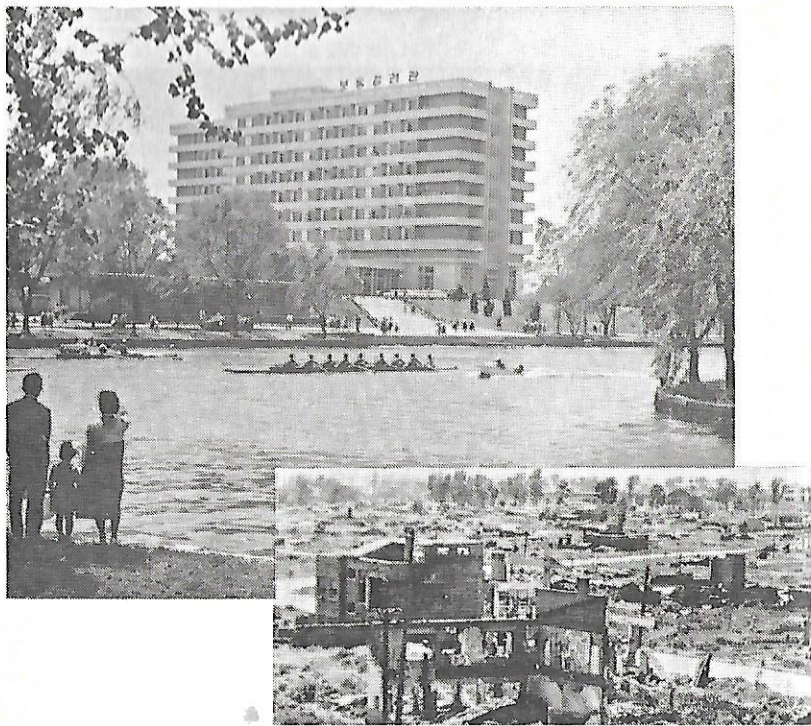
<sup>3</sup> See Shannon McCune: *Korea's Heritage* (C.E. Tuttle, 1956), Appendix G, for data on industrial development under Japanese occupation.

This background helps to explain the importance of what we saw when we visited Hamhung, one of the new industrial centers of socialist Korea. Amidst a huge industrial complex that is producing chemicals, fertilizer and textiles, among other things, we visited the Yong Sun Machinery Plant which employs thousands of workers. Virtually all of the machinery in this plant was produced in Korea and this machinery in turn is making equipment to be used in mining, metal-processing, fertilizer produc-

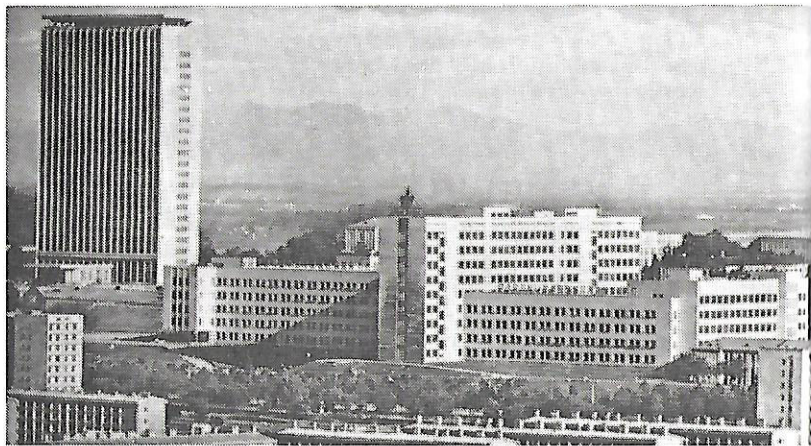


President Kim Il Sung at a characteristic factory visit, counselling a textile worker





A view (center) of Pyongyang after its destruction by U.S. bombers in the Korean War and as the city appears today



tion, generation of water and steam-power, and a wide range of manufacturing. We did not have the opportunity to see a 6,000-ton press in action, but it was equally fascinating to watch one half that size shape molten steel into a custom piece of machinery to be used in expanding socialist industry. What became evident through this process—and I realized that it was occurring simultaneously in other parts of the country for machine-building plants are located in Pyongyang, Wonsan, Kusan and Hichon—is that socialist Korea is capable of producing its own heavy industry in whatever special fields it chooses. It no longer is dependent solely on export of raw materials, characteristic of a colonial economy, but it has the capacity to change its ample mineral and power resources into capital goods.

Today the DPRK is exporting its machinery to many countries, including developed ones. Considering that at the time of liberation there was not a single machine-plant in the country, nor even one Korean engineer, the success of Korea in this regard is amazing. Lenin once said, in commenting on the difficulties of building the economic base for socialism, "Communism is Soviet power plus electrification of the whole country," an epigrammatic way of stating the dialectical relationship between political and economic advances. Contemplating the experience of socialist Korea, the thought occurred to me as I left the Yong Sun Plant how crucial a part machine-building has played in the movement toward socialism in north Korea.

Independence is the keystone of Korean industry, a goal expressed by the concept *juche*. What this means in economic terms was summed up by Professor Chang Hyok of Kim Il Sung University who stressed "using our own raw materials, our own techniques, our own workers to satisfy our needs." When it naturally occurred to us to ask



what distinction there was between *juche* and nationalism, Professor Hyok flashed a captivating grin and raised his eyebrows as if to reply, "What other way is there to political independence?" He cited some examples to quiet our doubts. Copper ore extracted from Korea's mountains sells at 13 rubles a ton when exported. A single ton of copper ore, however, can produce enough wire for 1,000 small motors. When these motors are exported they bring 10,000 rubles, thus vastly enhancing the value of the copper through manufacturing.

A more revealing instance of the necessity of *juche* stems from the drive to mechanize agriculture. To take tractors as a critical case, at present the DPRK has more than 3 tractors for every 100 chongbos of agricultural land (a chongbo is 2.45 acres). Plans exist to more than double that number in the next few years, requiring about 100,000 new tractors, and to complete mechanization of agriculture in 1980. Accomplishment of this goal would be an impossibility if tractors and other farm machinery had to be purchased abroad, but the goal is feasible when based upon the metals contained in Korea's mountains, the machinery being produced at Yong Sun, and the skilled workforce already assembled and continually growing in technical competence.

At the February 8 Vinylon Factory, also in Hamhung, we saw a perfect example of *juche* industry and we experienced the special pride Koreans take in this plant, for vinylon is a *juche* product. When the country was divided after 1945 the colder northern half was left without cotton-growing areas. In order to supply its clothing needs, socialist Korea developed a synthetic fabric made from its plentiful resources of limestone and anthracite. Vinylon is thus a totally home-made product utilizing domestic resources and technique. The February 8 Vinylon plant was completed in 1961 and it has been fully

equipped with machinery made in Korea. Today it is turning out the fibers for 450,000,000 meters of cloth, enough to provide two outfits of clothing a year for all the Korean people, north and south. In textiles, as in many areas of production, the People's Republic has liberated its economy from colonialism—that is, dependence on a more developed capitalist industrial economy to provide its manufactures in exchange for Korean raw materials, but at a price which proves exploitative.

At the Industrial and Agricultural Exhibition in Pyongyang we saw an impressive sampling of the 30,000 machines produced annually which make it possible for Korea to furnish 95 percent of its own industrial equipment. There were tractors, electric diesel locomotives, trucks, excavators, rice planters, harvesters, bulldozers, electric generators and transformers, an impressive assortment of electronic equipment, and various other machinery designed to do Korea's work. "It all proves that necessity here has been the mother of invention," was Prof. Howard Parsons' judgment when he visited the DPRK in 1971, another way of saying that industry is clearly *juche*-oriented. The exhibit that we saw in Pyongyang, with products that are being sold to 70 or more countries, was representative of industrial capacity and technical skill that only a few dozen countries of the world could display. Socialist Korea has entered an industrial era with 74 percent of the value of its national production now coming from industry and above 60 percent of its workforce engaged in non-agrarian work.

How has all of this been accomplished? There are no secrets to the course followed by the DPRK, though it hardly means that other countries will find the same course easy. At the heart of the process is a hard-working people, willing to work long hours not because of coercion but because of dedication to the socialist revolution.



Much of the wealth produced by this labor has been saved by reinvestment in capital goods, by the creation of heavy industry or improved agricultural technology or the infrastructure (power systems, transportation, etc.). In earlier industrial revolutions, such as occurred in Europe and the U.S., people were coerced into working hard while they were forced to submit to collective saving under a process directed by capitalists who in turn owned the wealth produced. These industrial revolutions, however, were able to ease the strains of a prolonged saving process by transferring a part of the burden of unpaid labor to the colonies. For socialist Korea there is another way, without imperialism or capitalism.

The morale of the workers is based in part on material benefits but in large part it emanates from a cultural revolution that is central to socialism. Workers must believe that their work is beneficial to themselves and to their nation. For this belief to be genuine and enduring, the people must attain a high degree of political consciousness; they must be concerned with the economic plans of their country, support these goals, and contribute to both the physical and political efforts toward fulfillment of these plans. Maintaining such morale is no easy matter, but it can be accomplished through a close relationship between the people and the state. The state cannot act apart from the people, nor could plans be more than hollow figures if workers do not support them in practice. In socialist Korea we found that the Workers' Party is active everywhere, with two million members out of a population of 14 million. Thus every family has a link to the ruling party and to the state, helping to shape policy as well as to implement it.

Besides hard work and the postponement of material gains in order to invest for the future, Korean development was facilitated by a great deal of assistance from the socialist world. Liberation from Japan and the possi-

bility of a People's Republic in the north were at the start a result of the Soviet army entering the peninsula in 1945. After the DPRK had been established, in 1950 the U.S. under the flag of the United Nations invaded Korea, destroying by air power every city and occupying the length of the peninsula. A large Chinese volunteer army, perhaps one million men, joined with Korean forces to push the U.S. Army back below the 38th parallel and thus liberate the socialist north. Following the enormously destructive war, the work of total reconstruction was begun with assistance from socialist countries playing a vital role.

To repair the almost totally destroyed industrial sector, the DPRK embarked on a series of economic plans in 1954. It is these plans, the framework of a rational socialist economy, which contribute one more element to Korean development, for the plans embody the careful use of resources in a manner best suited for national interests. Wise leadership and correct planning are thus a critical factor in Korea's development. During the first decade great emphasis was placed on heavy industry, especially machine building, metallurgy, chemicals and electric power. The Soviet Union provided substantial economic aid, about two billion rubles in credit, with People's China extending a lesser amount, while another half billion rubles came from the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia and Poland. This initial aid was of crucial importance, the Soviet Union alone equipping 40 plants and providing numerous technical advisors. By the end of a decade of planned growth the DPRK had achieved "substantial economic independence," able to continue industrial growth through its own technical and capital resources.<sup>4</sup> No one should take

<sup>4</sup> Glenn D. Paige: *The Korean People's Democratic Republic* (Stanford University Press, 1966), p. 40.



away from the marvelous energy and sacrifice expended by the Korean people in accomplishing their own revolution. All the aid in the world could have accomplished little without sound planning and hard work. But at the same time, if lessons are to be drawn from the DPRK relevant to the Third World, it would be dangerous to underestimate the role of socialist aid. Kim Il Sung has often commented on the importance of socialist assistance, even while stressing the necessity of *juche* or self-reliance as the correct long-run goal.

Every time the Korean people found themselves in a difficult situation, the peoples of the Soviet Union and other countries of the socialist community rendered them moral support and economic and technical aid. International solidarity with the socialist countries headed by the Soviet Union has been not only a firm guarantee of the Korean people's national independence but also a major factor facilitating socialist construction in our country, fostering its social development and ensuring the victorious advance of our revolution.<sup>5</sup>

One telling example of technical assistance is the large chemical factory in Hungnam where 50 of its engineers are graduates of the Soviet Sverdlovsk Polytechnical Institute while several thousand other engineers across the land have attended Soviet schools.

To understand more easily Korean development, an

<sup>5</sup> Kim Il Sung: *Triumph of the Ideas of the Great October Revolution* (Moscow, 1962), p. 331. Also see Kim Il Sung: *The Great Idea of Lenin on the National Liberation Struggle in Colonies Is Triumphant* (Pyongyang, 1970), where he expresses thanks to the socialist countries for "the great material and moral aid given to our people's struggle to safeguard freedom and independence of their fatherland and build a new society."

overall view of the various plans would be useful. Table 1 provides a simple picture of industrial growth beginning in 1954 and projected through the completion of the current plan. During our visit in 1973 we found that the Six Year Plan goals were generally on schedule or ahead of schedule, and so the tentative 1976 indices are reasonable estimates.

TABLE 1

INDEX OF INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTIVITY, 1956 - 1976  
(1956 Production =1)

	Year	Total Production	Industrial Goods	Consumer Goods
Three Year Plan 1954-1956	1956	1	1	1
Five Year Plan* 1957-1960	1960	3.5	3.6	3.3
Seven Year Plan* 1961-1970	1970	11.6	13.3	9.3
Six Year Plan 1971-1976	1976 (projected)	25.5	30.6	18.6

\* The year span of these plans can be confusing if certain facts are not known. The Five Year Plan was completed in four years while the Seven Year Plan required a decade for accomplishment, due to international dangers in the mid-1960's which led to greater emphasis on military production and delayed completion of the original goals.

While each of the plans saw advancement in all sectors of the economy, each was characterized by signal accomplishments. The 1954-1956 Plan restored wartime damage, attaining the 1949 level of productivity. From 1957-1960 the machine building industry was developed to the point where the DPRK could meet its own basic machine requirements. Important gains were also made



in consumer goods, especially with vinylon, so that in essentials the country reached self-sufficiency. The plan completed in 1970 ended what is known as "underdevelopment" in the DPRK, for by that year three-fourths of its productivity was industrial and the bulk of its labor force was non-agrarian. Efforts are being made in the current plan to bring technological and cultural gains more fully to agrarian workers, a topic to be discussed below.

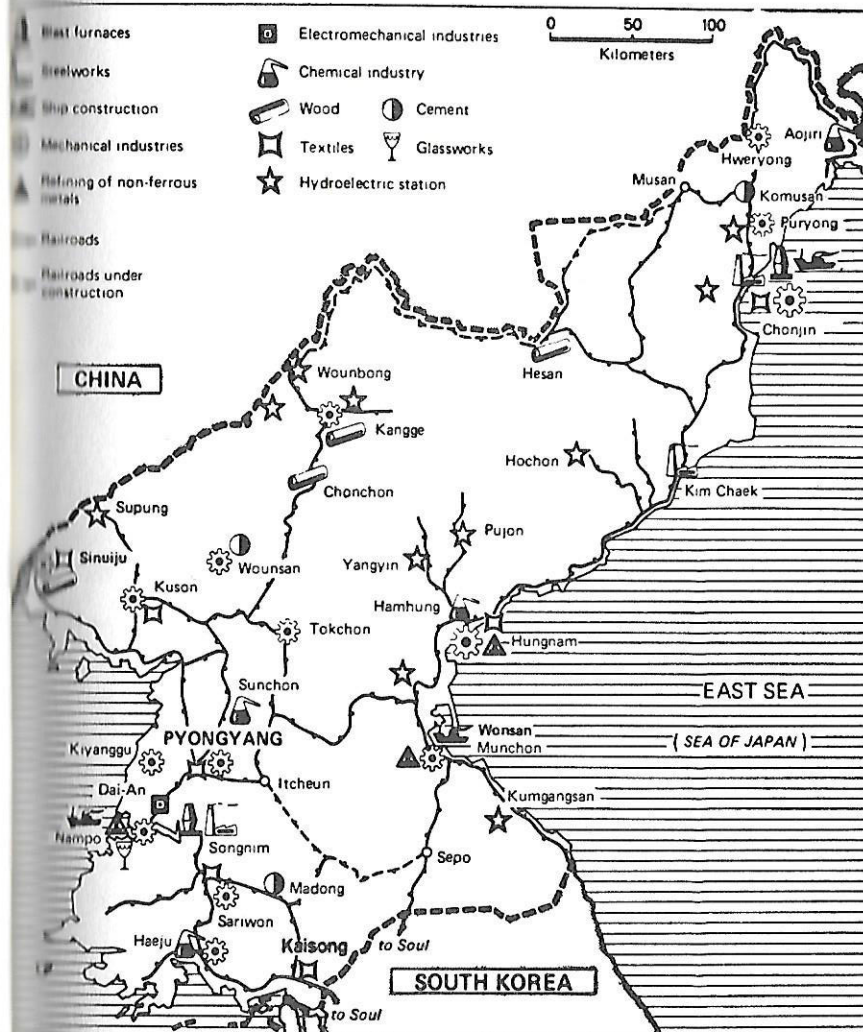
Growth figures for specific areas of heavy industry, as well as textiles, are provided in Table 2. Some idea of the widespread geographical distribution of the key industries is also indicated by the accompanying map.

TABLE 2

INDUSTRIAL GROWTH OF SELECTED ITEMS, 1949 - 1970  
(Each unit equals 1,000 metric tons  
unless otherwise specified)

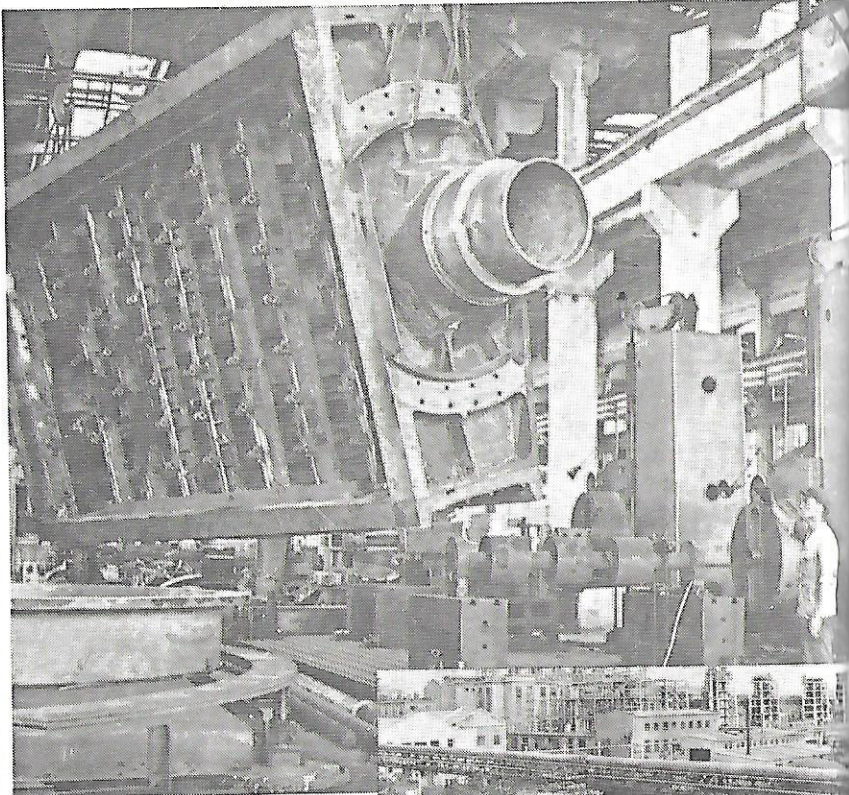
	1949	1960	1970
Coal	4,000	12,000	27,500
Steel	144	790	2,200
Pig Iron	166	960	
Chemical Fertilizer	401	700	1,500
Cement	537	2,400	4,000
Electricity (million KWH)	5,924	9,700	16,500
Textiles (million meters)	22	190	400

A fundamental aspect of the revolution against colonialism was agrarian reform, for the fledgling industry nationalized in 1945 could not provide the capital for rapid industrialization. Consequently a portion of capital savings had to be generated by production on the



Industries and railroads



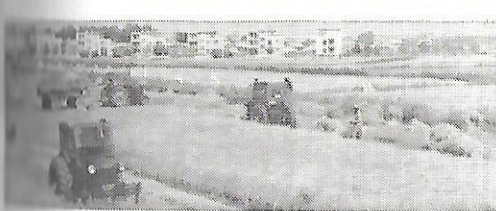
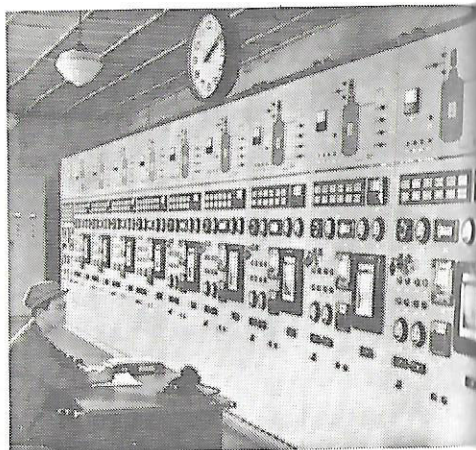
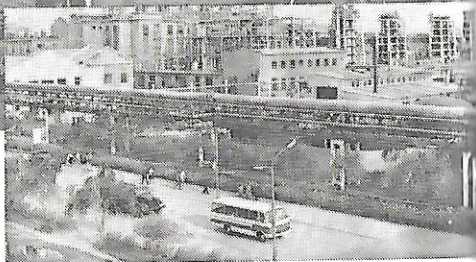


# THE FLOURISHING INDUSTRY OF NORTH KOREA

The Chollima Ryongsong  
Machine Plant (top)

The February 8th Vinylon  
Factory in Hamhung  
(center)

Control Room in the au-  
tomated Ponggung Youth  
Vinyl Chloride Factory  
(bottom)



## IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Two views of the Pong Dai  
Cooperative Farm outside Pyong-  
yang (top) and a section of the  
country-wide network of irriga-  
tion canals





land. In any case, socialism equals workers' democracy and that meant bringing an end to the feudal land relations which had prevailed for centuries. Between 1945-1947 an anti-feudal revolution was carried out as land was reclaimed from the Japanese who had stolen it, from absentee Korean landlords, and from large landowners in order to return it to those peasants who do the work and produce the wealth. Landlords who had more than 5 chongbos had the excess confiscated. Prior to the reform more than half of all the peasants in north Korea were poor or landless, with 56.7 percent of them holding only 5.4 percent of the arable land. By means of the land reform 37 percent of all cultivated land was distributed among the poor peasants, thus raising about one-third of the country's population (then about 9 million) from dire poverty to near-equality with the most prosperous peasants.<sup>6</sup> Not only was the basis for peasant democracy laid, but agricultural production made gains up to 1950 when it was devastated by U.S. bombing.

Following the war which lasted from 1950-1953 the DPRK embarked on industrialization which required both increased capital and a growing industrial labor force. Agriculture had to be made more productive in order to release manpower from the fields and to feed a growing population. While the land reform of 1945-1947 had created a more democratic society, the small landholdings which prevailed set a limit to technological improvements. A special problem faced north Korea for it had become a food-importing area during the colonial period, dependent on the more productive farmlands of the south. What was needed was to extend the area of

<sup>6</sup> According to A. Grajdanzev, "Korea Divided," *Far Eastern Survey* (October 1945), north Korea had 2,629,000 chongbos of cultivable land. The 971,768 chongbos distributed equal 37 percent of that figure.

cultivation, to introduce technological improvements and to instil revolutionary fervor among the peasants. For these reasons collectivization was deemed essential and it was carried out rapidly between 1954-1958.

TABLE 3

DISPOSITION OF EXPROPRIATED LAND IN NORTH KOREA  
1945 - 1947

RECIPIENTS	NO. OF FAMILIES	AREA IN CHONGBOS
Peasants without land (tenants)	442,973	603,407
Peasants with little land (subsistence)	260,501	345,974
Peasants hired by landlords	17,137	22,387
TOTAL	720,611	971,768

SOURCE: Chong-sik Lee, "Land Reform, Collectivization and the Peasants in North Korea," in Robert A. Scalapino: *North Korea Today* (Praeger, 1963), p. 68.

TABLE 4

## ESTABLISHMENT OF COOPERATIVE FARMING

	% OF LAND COLLECTIVIZED	AVERAGE NO. OF HOUSEHOLDS PER COOPERATIVE
1954	31.8	33
1956	49	55
1957	80	63
1959	100	273

Cooperative farming was fully established by 1959 with the average farm numbering 273 families working 1,250 acres of land. The goal for the future may very well be a larger collective along the lines of the Chong San Ri Cooperative outside of Pyongyang where 650 families



cultivate 3,000 acres. Chong San Ri is a model farm, highly mechanized with one tractor for every 30 acres cultivated. It is fully irrigated, thus protected from drought or flooding, and uses optimum fertilization. Many of the families live in new apartments with central heating, plumbing and electricity. Production has steadily increased since 1960 so that this farm is not only providing a rising income for its members but also capital to help other cooperatives attain the same level.<sup>7</sup>

A more typical farm is the Pong Dai Cooperative in South Hamkyong Province. Its 450 families number 2,000 people. Of this number 700 are workers who cultivate 1,560 acres of land. The farm has recently completed an irrigation system with a full network of pumping stations and channels. Heavy work in the fields is largely mechanized. Each family has a brick house with tile roof. As part of the accomplishment of the Seven Year Plan (completed in 1970) all of the houses in Pong Dai have electricity, which we were told is true of every rural home throughout the country. During the train ride from Hamhung to Pyongyang which crosses a mountain chain I saw electric lines reaching to every single home no matter how isolated. One of the important goals of the current plan is also to bring running water to every farm home.

The area in which Pong Dai is situated did not have a single school before liberation, but today one of its proudest achievements is the cultural revolution being waged. About half of the cooperative's members are currently studying, most of them children enrolled in the 10-year program. In addition there are nursery facilities for hundreds of other children and a kindergarten. The kindergarten children performed a lovely dance for us to

<sup>7</sup> For a fuller description see Howard Parsons, "A Visit to the DPRK," *Korea Focus* (Vol. I, No. 2), pp. 23-29.

the accompaniment of a song extolling the virtues of Kim Il Sung, and in one of the spotless classrooms another group of children, perhaps 6 years of age, sat around a model of Mangyongdae (Kim Il Sung's birthplace) listening to exemplary tales of Kim's revolutionary deeds.

Besides the universal education afforded the cooperative's 900 children, a certain number of middle school graduates continue their education at the nearby Higher Agricultural School which serves 1,000 students from the surrounding area. Pong Dai already boasts 80 engineers and assistant-engineers, indicative of the great emphasis placed on technical knowledge. At one cooperative farm which Wilfred Burchett visited in 1967 he found 55 children of peasants who were university graduates while 98 others were engaged in advanced studies.<sup>8</sup> This is the impression that one gets in traveling the length of the country, that everyone is studying, that everyone is working hard to improve his technical competence.

An enormous sense of pride in their accomplishment, based on hard work and sacrifice, pervades the people of North Korea for they have built every city, factory, cooperative farm and school in their own time. At Pong Dai this sense of pride radiated through the strong face of the manager, Rim Kim Sim, a man of about 60 years of age, with lines on his face which told as much as did his words. He remembered vividly the hardships of the past as he guided us through what must still seem like a miracle of the present to those old enough to remember. Pong Dai has its own small hospital, immaculately clean, with a doctor and three nurses. The hospital has equipment for examination and treatment of all ordinary illnesses, including delivery of babies and routine surgery. In the event of more unusual illness the patient would be sent to

<sup>8</sup> Wilfred Burchett: *Again Korea* (International Publishers, 1968), p. 87.



Hamhung Hospital, 30 minutes away, one of nine provincial hospitals fitted with the finest equipment for treatment of any medical problem. Pong Dai also has a dentist. All of these facilities are, of course, available to everyone without cost.

At Pong Dai the abundant fields and fruit orchards testify to the agricultural revolution which has turned North Korea into a self-sufficient food producer. During the past two decades of planning about 1,300,000 chongbos of land have undergone technological improvements including the extension of irrigation, mechanization and intense application of fertilizer. In addition another 400,000 chongbos which are not suited for mechanization have received other technological improvements, while 300,000 chongbos of orchards have been planted with apple trees. Substantial gains have been made in grain production which by 1974 was three times greater than in 1949, reaching a record 7 million tons. Rice production was above 3.5 million tons compared to 1,158,000 tons in 1949. The most spectacular gain has been in fruit production with the annual harvest above 1,000,000 tons, including apples, pears, peaches, grapes, cherries and various kinds of melons.<sup>9</sup>

Thus the land has been liberated from both the control of an exploiting class and from a backward technology. The path to independence has entailed expropriation, collectivization, and technical improvements in caring for the land. This agricultural revolution has been coupled with industrialization, the one to feed the other. Not only does industry need the growing ranks of workers and food to nourish them, but agriculture needs tractors, fertilizer, insecticides, electric power. What brings

<sup>9</sup> For further details on agricultural improvements see Robert Ante, "The Transformation of the Economic Geography of the DPRK," *Korea Focus* (Vol. I, No. 3), pp. 35-58.

these ingredients into harmony is competent planning under socialism. Many countries of the Third World lack the mineral and coal resources contained in the mountains of Korea, and so they cannot create heavy industry such as exists in the DPRK. But they can carry out agricultural revolution to lay the basis for socialist industry in order to utilize what national resources they do possess. There is no other way to end the colonial economy than to develop a coordinated technical competence in industry and agriculture, for as trade is conducted in the world today there is inequity between manufactures and raw materials. A nation which is totally dependent on export of raw materials is condemned to remain a retarded society incapable of developing the intellectual potential of the people or affording a rich cultural experience to them. At best it can only afford these things to a small ruling class. Thus the People's Republic of Korea stands in stark contrast to much of the Third World for it has begun a democratic cultural revolution which benefits all of the people. The door has been opened to a future socialist world.



2 THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION  
EDUCATION FOR SOCIALISM

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Having seen that socialism can develop industry rapidly and rationally, without the waste of natural and human resources characteristic of the capitalist world, I was next concerned with the human spirit. What had been done to raise the Korean masses from their former feudal and colonial mentality? How was a truly democratic society being created? Along the roads of many a Third World country one encounters villages whose undernourished and debilitated children, their bodies and minds literally wasted because of poverty, dramatically evidence the need for revolutionary change. Even before I had seen the economic progress of the Democratic People's Republic in Korea, I wondered what possibilities were posed for these backward societies by the Korean cultural revolution?



From the very first Korea put its best foot forward through its children. Shortly after our landing in Pyongyang, the strain of a long journey halfway round the world was eased when three children, girls about the age of 10, decked in colorful native costumes, met us at the ramp of our plane to present us with bouquets of flowers and welcoming smiles which cut through the necessary officialdom. While the children were obviously schooled in the performance, it was equally clear that they were deeply sincere—an impression that was often felt during our visit, one of technical competence matched by political consciousness. The child who came forward to me took my hand tightly between her two small hands and did not let go for the next ten minutes through photographs and the long walk to a waiting limousine. In her radiant eyes and in a periodic tugging of my hand I could read her feelings: she understood that I was a foreigner who had come to her beloved country, the land of Kim Il Sung and socialism, out of friendship. It was her duty—and how seriously she carried it through!—to make me aware of the friendship of the Korean people for those who came in friendship. She represented a human counterpart to the official recognition by the People's government that there is another America that does not condone imperialism or seek to hold back the struggle of peoples to accomplish socialism.

A few hours later from the seventh story balcony adjoining my suite at the spanking new Potong -Gong Hotel, I watched children playing in a nearby schoolyard. Their laughs might have sounded anywhere in the world. Their only distinguishing sign was a uniform of dark blue skirts or trousers topped by white blouses and red neck-scarves. Another group of children, this time only boys, chanced by through the garden separating the hotel from the schoolyard. They were stu-

dents, too, enroute somewhere. Not quite marching, they nonetheless seemed to be clustered behind a recognized leader. It was the leader who first acknowledged my presence with a uniquely Korean wave, and as I warmly responded in kind, some of the others expressed their individualism by waving from time to time according to impulse. It was another unofficial welcome.

It seemed fitting that the children should welcome us, for Korea is a youthful land despite its ancient traditions. Paradoxical as this may seem, since Pyongyang itself is 1,500 years old, youthful exuberance characterizes the current generations who have been born in a socialist era. More than half of the population is under the age of 25 which means their memories can stretch only to the Korean War, if that far, while the rest of Korea's colonial experience is something learned from tales spun by elders or from books. The People's Republic is very busy erasing the colonial mentality and constructing an independent industrial economy. No wonder the youth display a revolutionary consciousness that exudes confidence, pride, dedication and energy. Everything has been built in the current generation, for the bombing carried out by the U.S. in 1950-1951 virtually destroyed urban Korea, so much so that the U.S. command prided itself on a job well done in having leveled every important target. Thus the reconstruction of a People's Korea under socialism has been a process of liberation from backwardness and rubble, with all the youth fully enlisted in the act of creating a new Korea.

At the heart of the cultural revolution are the children, "the flower buds of the country" as they have been termed by Kim Il Sung. Insofar as socialism blossoms it will be through the consciousness of the children fashioned under its new morality. Certainly the People's Republic is sparing no effort to prepare an educated, dis-



ciplined, technically competent youth. We had ample opportunity to observe the workings of an educational system which embraces an 11-year compulsory program ranging from kindergarten through middle school, and beyond that technical schools or the university for those best qualified.

The Sin Hueng Senior Middle School in Pyongyang rounds out the student's basic education with a diversified program including history, geography, science, and physical and cultural activities. Technical competence and political consciousness are equally stressed. Science is taught in well-equipped classrooms with the teacher demonstrating whatever principle or technique is being studied; afterward groups of five students gathered around work-tables repeat the experiment while filling their notebooks with comments and illustrations. In science and other classes there is a mixture of theory and practice, for before long the students will be working at some task like operating a machine, repairing a radio, or building apartment houses. Perhaps this is best illustrated by a class conducted at the Children's Palace in Pyongyang where students were learning the theory of the combustion engine, the mechanics of a tractor, how to actually drive a tractor, and literally how to take apart and repair the machine. At an appropriate time in the learning process the students are provided an opportunity to use the tractor in work done on a cooperative farm or may apply their technical knowledge in some other occupation.

Everything done at Sin Hueng involves expansion of political consciousness for education is the most important means of carrying out an ideological revolution. The goal of education is not merely to prepare a technically competent worker, important as that is, but to create a class-conscious person who is proud of his status as

worker because he has an understanding of the revolution. A special room exists at Sin Hueng for studying the revolution—and no doubt such facilities exist in all the schools, for at the kindergarten on Pong Dai Cooperative Farm we saw the children learning about the revolution while seated around a large model of Mangyondae, Kim Il Sung's birthplace. If the Korean youth are to understand what the revolution is about, then they must be taught what colonial conditions were like, what sacrifices were made by the revolutionary forces, and what international conditions beset the spread of socialism to all of Korea. One of the guides at the Children's Palace, recalling his own colonial experiences when he was forced to speak Japanese at school, emphasized the purposes of such historical studies: "It is important for young children to understand our revolutionary tradition. Otherwise, they would fall away. The children who were five years old at the time of liberation are now 30. They have not experienced exploitation. For example, my son who is 25 and is a student at the university does not know what it means to wear straw shoes. Thus our education must be revolutionary and class education."

We heard much about "serving the people," a philosophy which is also expressed by the saying "One for all and all for one." Korean socialists are fond of such epigrams which cover a lot of ground. For example, when I asked whether students ever fail, the head teacher responded with a concrete application of the "all for one" principle. "We do not let one student fall behind," he explained. "Those who are ahead spend time helping the few who lag behind. With the aid and encouragement of his peers, the student will soon catch up." The head teacher was surprised when I asked about disciplinary problems, so I hastened to explain the serious disorder prevalent in many urban schools in the U.S.



He pointed out that only rarely did Korean teachers face the need to discipline students. Education is so highly valued among Koreans and the sense of its practicality so strong in the thoughts of students that there is a general attitude of serious effort. For a student to shirk his work would be like a peasant unwilling to harvest his rice. When some problem does arise, however, pressure from peers exerted through student organizations like the Young Pioneers is always sufficient. In this relationship I found evidence of the working of socialism, supported by the order in each classroom, the vigor of the students and the neatness of their notebooks, the clean halls and playgrounds (which I saw raked each morning, rain or shine, by student work teams).

What a relief it was to travel about north Korea and never once see a broken school window! It was also encouraging to learn that at Sin Hueng there is a ratio of 1 teacher for every 17 students. Insofar as the People's Republic has a problem, it is not one of unemployed teachers but rather how to provide more and better trained teachers for its rapidly expanding system. With about 4 million youth in the compulsory school program and kindergartens, plus over 600 higher schools serving adult needs, the demands upon the educational resources of a newly-developing country are indeed immense.

The school program is a rigorous one, extending through 10 months with an ordinary school day running from 8 to 1 and then from 4 to 6. In general the morning work is academic while the afternoon curriculum includes physical activities, arts and crafts, and organizational meetings. Every child at the age of five begins study of a musical instrument and continues this study as part of normal schooling. In a sense school never stops functioning, for while Saturday is not an ordinary class-day there are extra-curricular activities including special

excursions. Political consciousness and practice are also furthered by youth organizations such as the Young Pioneers (age 9-13) and the Socialist Working Youth League (14 and older). Even during summer vacation, as we traveled through Korea we found the highways lined with friendly youth who comprise the Green Guards that tend the greenery adjacent to the roads. For me it was a satisfying experience to contemplate these Green Guards, not too busy to signal us with a friendly hello, spending their holidays in beautifying their country. "Labor is a sacred duty and a right," one youth told me, and under these circumstances it was credible.

Education is something of a mania in socialist Korea. Perhaps the single most telling fact is that all Koreans, young and old, lay aside other tasks each Saturday and Sunday afternoon to spend two hours in study. It is a marvelous collective effort to amend the deficiencies of the past, to raise political consciousness, to expand scientific knowledge, and to create a cultural climate that values intellectual as well as physical effort. One could only hope as an American that it might be possible for Americans to let their cars stand idle one day of the week in order to read a book, or if that be too much to wish, to turn television into a great school providing instruction, or a theater of significance, or a symphony hall. But would that sell products?

The expansion of education in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is an impressive accomplishment, and while statistics in themselves do not tell the whole story, they are a revealing part of it. Prior to liberation there was not a single technical school or university in the whole country. Today, in the People's Republic alone there are more than 500 technical schools and 140 institutes to provide higher education. A dozen of these schools are medical colleges which have trained more



than 50,000 doctors, giving the Democratic People's Republic of Korea a ratio of 1 doctor for every 280 people (higher than in the affluent U.S.). More than half a million engineers and teachers have also been educated. Korea under socialism has become one of the most broadly educated societies in all of Asia.

Kim Il Sung University in Pyongyang is the largest university with 11,000 full-time and 5,000 part-time students. As in the lower schools, those enrolled here put in long hours, as many as 35-40 classroom hours a week for those in the sciences, and of course many more hours in homework. The library is a large, comfortable building with study desks for 1,200 people and the campus embraces dormitories, a hospital, and eating and recreational facilities, in addition to many classroom buildings. All students get stipends comparable to small salaries while those who live on campus also receive free room and board, books, and of course medical care. The principle operating in higher education is that the student is performing an intellectual labor which ultimately enriches the productivity of the country; hence he is compensated for his work as a student. He receives a three-week vacation and in addition spends five weeks of the summer in some form of social labor, usually agricultural.

It is difficult to judge the quality of education for that involves highly subjective values as well as class attitudes. What was evident at Kim Il Sung University was that students are serious about their work in the manner that all Koreans display toward their tasks. It was this overwhelming sense of purpose which struck Professor Howard Parsons during his visit in 1971:

"As an educator I can testify that the critical problem for universities in a capitalist country like our own is that, because society lacks a cohesive and human pur-

pose, students likewise lack such purpose and do not know what their education is for or how they will make a living or develop a significant life when they leave the university. This is not the case in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Every student in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea knows that he belongs to society, that he is needed, that when he equips himself with knowledge and skills he can contribute to fulfilling society's needs, and that when he does so he will be appreciated."<sup>1</sup>

This is what a revolution means for the individual. If he operates within it, sharing the societal goals fully, whatever choices he makes will be meaningful and rewarding. Every youth that I saw or spoke with radiated that sense of belonging.

When I contemplate the students in American universities, I find a stark contrast in the large number who reflect the malaise of our society. It is not only that their education is shaping them for serving a corrupt corporate world *à la* Watergate, a fate many sensitive students reject; but it is also that many values proclaimed by the university are blatantly prostituted. At Villanova University, a self-proclaimed Christian university teaching the ethic of brotherhood and "Thou shall not kill," all through the Vietnam war a naval ROTC program continued to train officers for Vietnam! No wonder so many students are floundering in seeking values other than those practiced at the university or in the society at large.

The Palace for Students and Children in Pyongyang provided another illustration of how the cultural revolution is shaping a socialist youth. At this massive building with something like 500 rooms we spent an enjoyable

<sup>1</sup> Howard Parsons, "A Transformation in Education," *Korea Focus* (Vol. I, No. 2), pp. 31-35.



Sunday afternoon, observing some of the 10,000 children who use its facilities every day. A large staff of teachers, artists, technicians and athletes were guiding young people in endeavors that ranged from pure pleasure to pure politics. In one political class a group of girls, about the age of 12 or 13, were learning the 100-year history of U.S. imperialism vis-a-vis Korea, dating back to the intrusion into Korean waters by the American warship *General Sherman* in 1866. For Koreans there is a continuity in history from the *General Sherman* to the *Pueblo*, a theme they are not apt to forget as long as American soldiers remain in south Korea.

While this class was 100 percent political, instilling national pride coupled with hatred of U.S. imperialism, most of the activities in the Palace were otherwise, such as wrestling, gymnastics, painting, embroidering, radio repair, machine shop, communications, etc. In one room some boys were learning about trucks with a fascination that reminded me of what it must be like to first discover trucks. I recalled when I was a boy how I loved to look at railroad engines, and in the sparkling eyes of these boys I shared for a moment their revolution which was opening new doors for them. We would not understand the spirit of the Korean people if we forgot how new the industrial revolution is in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In the past they knew only the exploitative end and not the first-hand experience of the marvels of its technology.

Fun is often blended with politics as a group of children demonstrated by a hand-puppet show in which animals were used to encourage the idea of loving labor. An ambitious raccoon goes fishing one day, and after his first catch he places the fish in a basket. While the raccoon returns to his fishing, a lazy but sly fox manages to steal the fish and gulp it down. When the raccoon makes a

second catch he returns to the basket but, to his dismay, there is no other fish! Perplexed but undaunted, the raccoon returns to his work, but after a third catch and a still empty basket he has had more than enough of exploitation. This time he uses the third fish as bait, placing a hook in it before pretending to return to work. From his hiding place the raccoon watches the fox sneak to the basket to swallow the fish, hook and all. This time the fox is hooked as all the children applaud.

In one dance studio a group of girls about the age of 10 put on an amazingly skillful performance of Korean dance and classical ballet. They moved so gracefully and dramatically that it was natural to marvel at their talent. But the marvel is equally in the society which makes available excellent training to talent, not wealth, thus discovering among the children of workers a vast human potential. Recently on American television I heard a show called "The Advocates" seriously debate the question whether college education should be for everyone. A professor from New York University (better left unnamed) advanced the argument that culture along the lines of Beethoven and Tolstoy can only be appreciated by 5 percent of the people—the point of his arrogance being, why waste a liberal college education on the other 95 percent?! If that professor had meant to state a fact about the current tastes of the American people, that would have been one thing; but to advocate the perpetual denial of the treasures of a civilization to the mass of young people is shameless class apologetics. In the emphasis that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is placing upon technical knowledge, it is important that every child is encouraged to love music, dance, theatre and literature. There will be no uncultured second class of workers or peasants.

Proof that the cultural revolution involves both a heightened political consciousness and the expansion of



knowledge of Korean culture was provided for us in many beautiful ways. Perhaps the most inspiring was a program by the Children's National Orchestra, led by a 15-year old boy and accompanied by a choir of 250 children. With an exuberance that turns proficiency into art these children offered a program that would have honored any nation. To tell part of the program is to tell the way in which art conduces to political consciousness. An opening number by orchestra and choir confidently rendered the lovely lyrics, "We Have Nothing to Envy." Later in the program we saw the fruit of the musical training given at the Children's Palace when a ballet troupe of 55 children performed a paeon in honor of the revolution. Some of the dance numbers told stories such as "Red Tie on the Railroad Line" in which some children decoy a bombing attack in order to save a train, or "Thanks to the People's Army" where Young Pioneers raise vegetables to feed the soldiers. The finale was a rousing hymn in honor of Kim Il Sung, "Long Life to Our Fatherly Leader." A capacity audience warmly received each number, establishing an emotional link with the children which could be sensed by anyone in the hall. The message was clearly getting through.

A few themes seem predominant in the entertainment provided by cinema, TV and literature. More often than not, the story deals with war, either the guerrilla struggle waged against the Japanese or the Korean War. As early as 1951 that theme was proposed by Kim Il Sung who urged writers "to vividly express the lofty patriotism and valiant fighting spirit of our people, as well as their absolute conviction of ultimate victory." In some ways the film offerings are reminiscent of Hollywood, for there are stock villains—the greedy Japanese landlord, the collaborator with imperialism, the arrogant American general, the drunken U.S. soldier; and stock heroes embody love of fatherland, sacrifice for the people, dedication to the re-

volution. There are also important differences, for in none of the war pictures is violence splashed across the screen. In fact, the grimness of war is often relieved by musical renditions such as a soldier recalling his home or a group of soldiers singing about why they are fighting or their future goals. One of the most popular themes concerns the family separated by war, as in the revolutionary opera "Song of Mount Kungang-san," which has also been made into a film. Against a background of lovely music and mountain scenery, a family forced to flee by Japanese aggression is reunited after 20 years of sorrow. Such is the simple but poignant story which touches upon the experience of many thousands of Koreans whose families are separated because of war or the continued division of the country. Love of family and hope for a united Korea are two ideals strongly encouraged by the cultural revolution.

Very important to cultivating an appreciation of the revolution and willingness to defend it are the popular revolutionary operas. One of the best loved is "The Flower Girl" which portrays the national suffering under colonialism. The heroine is a young girl who is forced to replace her sick mother as a servant to a Japanese landlord. In her little free time she sells flowers to get medicine for her dying mother. "The Sea of Blood" also deals with Japanese exploitation, except this time the mother of an oppressed family gradually develops political consciousness until she joins the revolutionary struggle as leader of the village Women's Association. Another vital theme, the Fatherland Liberation War (the Korean War), is developed in "A True Daughter of the Party." The heroine is a young nurse who in the course of combat grows in reverence for the Workers' Party and for the great leader Kim Il Sung. She joins the Party shortly before she dies a heroic death while fighting U.S. imperialism.

To the Westerner, such as myself, the themes of re-



volutionary opera may seem to have a fairytale quality for they deal with experiences foreign to him. For instance, a popular story deals with a young woman who escapes from a brutal landlord and discovers personal liberation within the fold of the national liberation army. To a revolutionary society in the very process of carrying forward that revolution such a theme is fully relevant for it epitomizes the struggle against the past—landlords, colonialism, male domination—and whatever residues remain. What the Westerner must ask is a simple question. Why would a revolutionary society favor stories of feudal princes or even of vengeful lovers to those of revolutionary heroes?

A word more about the esthetic principles which underlie "revolutionary" art, since to many Americans popular Korean art would appear trite or impossibly contrived. Always the purpose of the arts is to teach some revolutionary idea by depicting the struggle between the old and the new, thus showing in what ways the new socialist Korea is better than the colonial society. While that might seem obvious the fact is that in many instances young Koreans lack personal experiences to make comparisons. For instance, if one is less than 30 years of age he could not even remember a landlord. But as Kim Il Sung has suggested, "Can we allow ourselves to forget the landlord when the landlord does not forget us who confiscated his land?" What happened to some of the landlords is depicted in a film called "Defenders of Height 1,211" about the Korean War. A young Korean soldier who had been the son of a hired farmhand comes face to face with the former landlord who had often humiliated both father and son. The landlord had fled southward in 1945 to become an officer in the puppet south Korean army. Now he appears as an invader who wishes to reimpose the exploitative capitalist system. Such a theme is ideologically war-

ranted, but whether it is handled well or not esthetically is a judgment to be made first by Korean audiences, the people. The more the people of the United States learn about Korea, the better they will be able to add their own informed judgments on such art.

There is also an attempt to convey a special set of humanistic values through the arts. Men create the arts, but the arts in turn express a view of life which fashions human consciousness. For socialist Korea it is important that the people's consciousness reject colonialism or what is called "flunkeyism." Hating the enemy is not sufficient, but people must be inspired to love their own working class and their homeland. Thus the heroes of the arts should be working people who are likeable, strong men and women committed to the revolution, cheerful even in the face of adversity, confident of overcoming every obstacle. They must not appear either as automatons or as individuals obsessed with their personal goals. "It is necessary to emphasize the fact that it is not the machine but the man that plays the decisive role in production," says Kim Il Sung, "and to assert clearly the Marxist-Leninist viewpoint, that great life is created not by the strength of one or two outstanding individuals but by the struggle of millions of working people conscious of their historical mission."<sup>2</sup>

A vital aspect of the cultural revolution is to instill values of equality and human dignity among all the people. Korea does not have any social minorities, but traditionally it has relegated women to a subordinate role. Traveling through the People's Republic I did not encounter any women's liberation movement that appeared dramatic. Women in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea retain much of the demeanor and dress of the past, much of

<sup>2</sup> Kim Il Sung: *On Revolutionary Literature and Arts* (Pyongyang, 1972), p. 37.



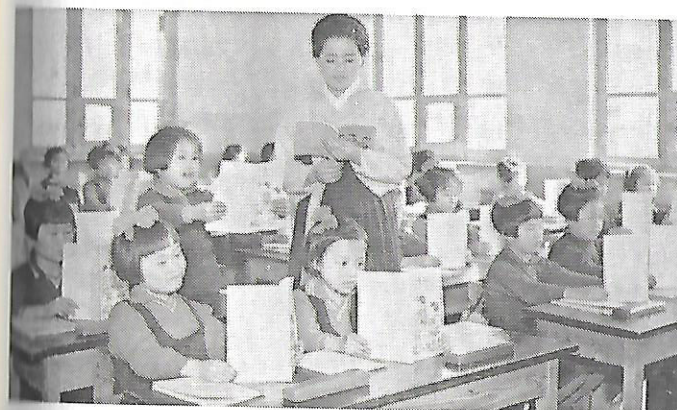
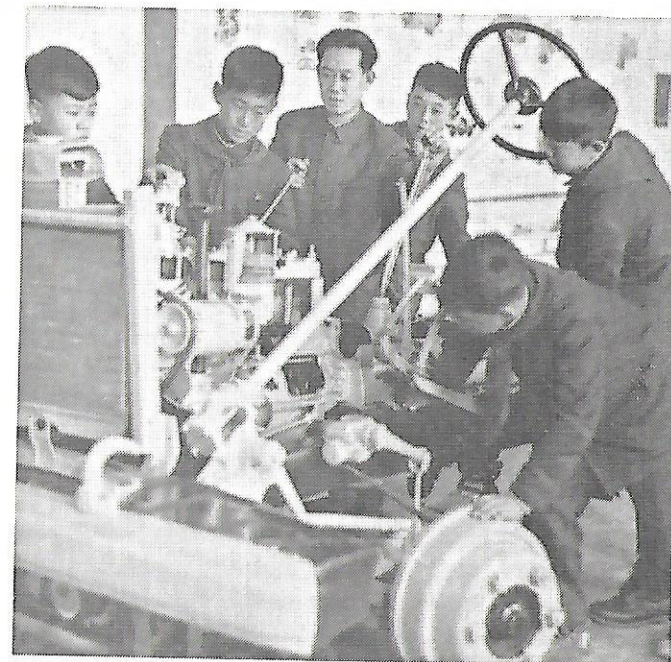
what used to be considered "feminine." When they are in the presence of men they tend to be retiring, exceptionally graceful, and obliging. All of this simply deals with manners, none of it to be deplored. Looking at more vital aspects of liberation, women are now working in all sectors of the economy at equal pay and women receive education comparable to men. Two out of every three doctors are women, and in the plants which we visited more than a third of the workers were women. At the Yong Sun Machine Plant a woman was operating the 3000-ton press. Many of the teachers and guides are women, and in the fields we saw women working side-by-side with men.

Visiting the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at the time we were there was Myra Roper, an Australian professor and China scholar, as well as a sensitive observer on this question. Her judgment was that women have greater educational and work opportunities in the DPRK than in most western countries. The process of women's liberation dates back to the long anti-Japanese struggle when "the help of the Women's Corps was crucial," and during the Korean War "women ran much of the country when men were at the front."<sup>3</sup> After 1953 women had an equal role to play in reconstructing the country. Necessity and Marxist principles thus point to the same goal, the integration of women into the technical and cultural revolutions. Women are also needed to defend the country, so they learn equally to bear arms. Backward attitudes of male chauvinism or a perverted sense of femininity would retard the development of a strong socialism and weaken its self-defense, something the Democratic People's Republic of Korea cannot afford.

To facilitate women's liberation, factories and farms have nurseries to care for young children. Mothers are

<sup>3</sup> Myra Roper, "Out of the Ashes," *The Internationalist*, London, Nov. 1973.

# CULTURAL REVOLUTION AND EDUCATION







allowed to tend their infants three times during the work-day. If a mother has three or more children her working hours are reduced from 8 to 6 without any loss of salary, and pregnant women are given three-month maternity leaves. Apart from their outside work, however, many women are too burdened with household chores to allow them as full participation in public affairs as men enjoy. An important part of the current Six Year Plan is to lighten household work by the production of such consumer products as electric cooking pots, refrigerators, washing machines and processed foods. Women will thus gain more time to participate in the political processes of the revolution. A large number of women are members of the Workers Party of Korea, as one can see by a random count of party badges worn by cadres; but I met very few women who held the top political or managerial positions. Women still have a way to go, but it was clear that liberation was a serious matter in which women were being fully enlisted. The steps taken in one generation under socialism give promise of a fully equalitarian society in the near future.

The peasantry is another class of people who have known exploitation through history—by feudal lords, landlords, and a colonial system which transferred wealth produced on the land to urban centers. Even under socialism the solution of the peasant question is no automatic matter, for the land must at first help to provide the capital to lay the foundation for industry. There is always the danger that inequities between agricultural workers and urban workers will persist. Now that substantial industry exists, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is making great efforts to increase peasant income, to lighten farm work by mechanization, to reduce the agrarian workday to eight hours, and in other ways to equalize working conditions.



Peasants must also be aided by cultural revolution to transcend a petty-bourgeois outlook which aspires to individual ownership (inherited from the former landlord tenant society). Cooperative farming has made it possible for peasants to develop a collective outlook, an attitude more akin to working class consciousness. At Pong Dai Cooperative, important decisions are made by general meetings of all the men and women 18 years or older. For the first time in their lives peasants are making choices affecting more than a chongbo of land! What shall the cooperative plant? What proportion of its earnings shall be placed in social funds or invested in new machinery? Who shall serve on the Management Committee? What treatment shall be accorded a shirker? These are some of the decisions made by the assembly of voters.

What the People's Republic plans is "a gradual elimination of the distinction between town and country." The peasants will not disappear, but as their material conditions rise to the level of industrial workers, their cultural backwardness will also be ended. Equal schooling and exposure to an advancing socialist culture will make possible for the first time in Korea's history a truly national culture—one shared by urban and rural workers, a working class culture.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> See "The Rural Question under Socialism," pp. 53-65 in Kim Il Sung: *Revolution and Socialist Construction in Korea* (International Publishers, 1971).

### 3 A SOCIETY OF WORKERS

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One of the deepest impressions I have of the DPRK is that it is a workers' society. Of course, every society consists of workers to a large extent. But there is something special about socialist Korea, a pervasiveness of both labor and proletarian values. As I traveled the streets of its cities, or toured its factories and farms, everyone seemed to be a worker who moved with energy and resolve. It was a sight in sharp contrast to the Third World to see a former colonial area now such an industrious society fully employed, and of course in striking contrast to the capitalist world there is no parasitical ruling class. Socialist Korea conveyed the impression that everyone is working or studying, and often both; and certainly there are no idlers, beggars or delinquent youth to shatter the illusion of a society unified in its efforts.

There was also a striking equality among the people in



both their attitudes to each other and in their material conditions. People dress much the same, men favoring dark trousers and white vinylon shirts; or if they hold white-collar jobs, either dark Western-style suits or grey suits of the style that Kim Il Sung and other officials wear on public occasions. Women wear printed frocks or white blouses with dark skirts. For festive occasions they don more colorful traditional dresses. No one in the country seems poorly dressed, but at the same time I did not see anything that could be called "conspicuous consumption." Even one of the vice-premiers that we interviewed wore the standard socks which drooped over the plastic shoes that everyone wears. His dress complemented the proletarian attitudes he expressed. In housing, too, there is a great amount of equality with most of the workers living in small but comfortable apartments. It is possible that some of the prominent government officials inhabit better quarters, but I traveled the length and breadth of Pyongyang and did not see any exclusive district. At the same time, I was careful to note that there are no slums in Pyongyang, Hamhung or any of the smaller towns that I saw. Socialist Korea lacks the Park Avenue-ghetto gap which characterizes the capitalist world. Again and again, whether it was a matter of diet or educational opportunities or the personal sense of dignity, I was confronted with the startling possibility that the People's Republic may well be one of the most rapidly advancing equalitarian societies on earth.

One evening late in my visit, as I stood on the hotel balcony contemplating all that I had seen, it began to dawn on me what was happening in Korea. Looking the length of a deserted boulevard of Pyongyang at two o'clock in the morning, with not a person to be found, gave me a sense of tranquility and bewilderment. Everyone in the city was not asleep, for lighted windows

like my own speckled the horizon. But there was nothing to draw one outdoors at such an hour, no wanderlust promising the adventures of the unforeseen. Had I been in Manhattan, what might be possible? What an insight into myself and bourgeois society that train of thought stimulated. Here in Pyongyang one might read in lieu of sleep, or listen to music, or accomplish some neglected chore of study or household. For most of the people, of course, as in any society, the toil of the closed day had wearied the body for sleep and the day ahead demanded a refreshed body and spirit. There was no question posed except sleep. Order and rational purpose pervaded the society at this odd hour as it did at every time.

While society by its very nature is orderly, in the DPRK the extent to which order is displayed bewilders the Western mind marked by individual concerns, competition, widespread dissent and substantial aimlessness. I must confess that, whether out of mere habit or a degree of bourgeois corruption in my own spirit, the orderly society being created in socialist Korea satisfied my intellect but awakened a slight emotional anxiety on my own part.

The collective sense in the DPRK is being pitted against the cult of the individual dominant in the capitalist world. Life has its meaning in terms of family loyalty, social dedication, and national purpose. Through such values the individual is not lost but found. Korean education and culture epitomize collectivism by slogans such as, "One for all and all for one." What the "one for all" means is that the individual is expected to subordinate any personal goals or inclinations to the needs of society—that is, to strive for the ideal of a complete meshing of the personal with that of the social imperative, to live a life of social service and responsibility. The other side of the picture, the "all for one," means the individual is afforded a high degree of aid from society to develop his body and



mind. The child has a birthright to good nutrition, ten years or more of schooling, comprehensive medical and dental care, and decent housing. As an adult he is guaranteed the right to work along with it an advancement in material standards, recreational and educational opportunities, one-month vacations each year, and continued medical care. Beyond the age of 60, which is the time of retirement, his needs are met by the collective savings. For each Korean under socialism there is the promise of nearly total security.

A deep philosophical question is raised about individualism as opposed to society. Life is experienced through individual consciousness which is sustained by a healthy body, so one cannot gainsay the value of the individual person. But in the West, of course, belief in the individual is distorted into a cult which is belied by reality. Western individualism rests upon applied social Darwinism and racism. For many, if not most, individualism in the sense of free development of personality is forfeited by exploitation, ruined health, illiteracy and ignorance. How much individuality is afforded a ghetto child who is liable to be "hooked" or imprisoned by his mid-teens? What individuality is there in being thrown out of work at the age of 45? For the poor, for those stigmatized by racism, for those cast into a ghetto existence, what happens to their individuality? Marxism has posed that question in the fullest humanism: why should the proletariat be sacrificed to afford the wealthy few their individuality? In socialist Korea the individuality of the masses is being rescued from the colonialism which trampled it.

What collectivism amounts to in practice strikes the eye almost everywhere. On an ordinary day in any city of the DPRK the following scenes are visible. Shortly after dawn brigades of children, members of the Young Pioneers, march through the streets singing songs to General Kim Il

Sung and to the Fatherland as they head toward historical parks and monuments. With the little whisk brooms they carry, the children clean the grounds and then perform a few patriotic rituals. In a park at Hamhung where a towering statue of Kim Il Sung dominates the landscape I watched a squadron of girls about 8 years old perform a clean-up detail at 10 o'clock at night. Their work finished, they proudly sang "The Song of General Kim Il Sung" near the base of the statue, turned in unison, and then marched in formation toward their homes, having completed an honored assignment. Was it just the opportunity to stay up late at night that explained the sparkle in their eyes? I doubt it. There is something about the desire for social approbation that runs deep in children, and the society that roots it out—so that children will toss empty pop bottles into the streets or uproot flowers in a public park—must work awfully hard to destroy it. It is not the cleaning-up which is the essence of these details (for I saw absolutely no litter) but the instilling of love of the country and collective responsibility for its welfare.

Each morning out of the apartment buildings of Pyongyang pour groups of youngsters bound together by age and habitat to jog down the avenues in rhythm singing patriotic chants. The country needs healthy bodies and this is one way to serve the country. Adults are not neglectful of this task, either, for many formations of men can be seen running while the women seem to favor calisthenics. A more striking scene is the early evening sport which, for some, involves a half-mile long string of joggers aside the highway. I cannot help recall the adage, "God helps those who help themselves." In the case of Korea, helping oneself to a strong, healthy body also serves the country's needs, a happy concurrence of individual and social welfare.

The collective sense, to be a truly motivating spirit,



must be reenforced by equitable working and living conditions. Far and away the most dramatic evidence of hard work bringing benefits to all the people are the bright new high-rise apartments that abound in Pyongyang, Hamhung, and everywhere else. Virtually all of the urban population live in buildings constructed of prefabricated concrete blocks which are layered anywhere from four to twelve stories high. These apartments provide comfortable living with central heating, running water, electricity—all at a cost approximating three percent of a family income.

What is the interior of an apartment like? We encountered Nurse Li Yon Kyong for the first time on busy Cholima Avenue in Pyongyang as she was returning from her night shift at the hospital. It was an impromptu meeting, but learning that we were Americans who wanted to know how people lived, she was gracious enough to invite us to her home. She was proud of her apartment, eager to share some of her revolutionary dedication with us. After climbing several flights through a tidy hallway, we removed our shoes and entered a quiet apartment for her husband was away at work in a textile factory and on the way he had safely ensconced their two children of 5 and 7 years at a nursery and kindergarten. We sat on cushions in a living room. It was simply furnished with a desk and chair, bookcase, portable closet, electric fan and TV. Another room of the same size contained a small bed, several cabinets and dressers, a table, and an electric sewing machine. Both of these rooms serve as bedrooms at night with mats providing additional bedding. There was also a bathroom and a kitchen with a sink, three-burner butane stove, small electric plate, counter and cabinets, and a radio.

Even before we began a pleasant conversation with Li it was apparent that she was part of a revolutionary house-

hold, for the walls held several pictures of Kim Il Sung, including one of his birthplace at Mangyongdae, and the bookcase was amply provided with his writings. It came as no surprise that her husband was a party member, though she was not. It was easy to elicit information and judgments from Li for she was thoughtful but very natural in expression. When she spoke of her children it became obvious that she anticipates a steadily-improving future for them. "They will be able to develop their talents as they wish," she said simply. Would she have any more children, since she was only about thirty? "We are satisfied for the present." As with all the Korean women I met, Li seemed self-assured. A kind of subdued pride balanced her cultivated reservation.

One of her material goals for the near future is to buy a refrigerator, for now Li must shop daily to assure the freshness of the family's food. Since it is one of the aims of the current economic plan to lighten women's household work, refrigerators will become more plentiful. The kind she has in mind, a middle-sized one, will cost 100 won. Will the family be able to afford it? Family earnings amount to 180 won a month, with about 130 won paying for basic needs. Since other essentials like medical care and education are already provided, it seemed the refrigerator was in sight as long as other furnishings or luxuries were deferred.

To compare the living standards of one country with another is always difficult, and in dealing with an Asian socialist country the difficulties are compounded. But it is always an interesting matter, a short-cut to understanding. For Americans highly dependent on cars, we can say right off that Koreans do not have cars, so they lack the accompanying pleasures, inconveniences and expenses. Further, the Korean income is not needed to pay additional taxes, medical costs, various kinds of insurance (in-



cluding automobile, life, fire, theft, accident, etc.), or education. Most of a Korean's income goes toward food, household furnishings and clothing. What this means is that the cost of an item of food or clothing will often be larger relative to total income than an American is used to. Thus it will sound "expensive." For example, a Korean factory worker may earn 100 won a month compared to the American worker's \$600. If he buys a shirt it will cost 7.5 won or 7.5 percent of his monthly income. The American can buy a shirt of good quality for 7.5 dollars, less than 2 percent of his income. Thus the Korean shirt is "expensive" to American ears. What we must keep in mind is that in a socialist country an income does not need to spread over so many items. This is not to suggest that the living standards of Americans and Koreans are materially equally. One important point to remember is that the Korean economy has been industrialized less than 20 years, whereas American industry has developed steadily over more than a century.

A Korean worker generally earns between 70 and 100 won a month depending on his skill and tenure at a job. Often he receives fringe benefits such as free lunch and subsidized vacations. Putting aside these extras, the average income is 90 won and since most families have two workers, a family is likely to have the 180 won that Li cited for her family. We might take note of the fact that figures for average income in Korea are more meaningful than they would be in capitalist countries for there is a greater equality in income. Very few people earn more than 100 won a month. Thus, when we try to estimate the living standard of Koreans we do not face the problem that would exist in the United States: what do average incomes have to do with the millions of welfare families, the unemployed, the lowest paid? Lumping together \$15,000 and higher incomes with those of the unskilled, and then di-

viding, produces a highly misleading average higher than the majority of workers actually receive.

A typical urban family in socialist Korea would be four or five people living on an income of 180 won a month. Rent and utilities would cost about 4 won a month. The largest expenditure would be food. For its protein the family would depend largely on rice which is very cheap, 8 tsun a kilogram (there are 100 tsun in a won; a kilogram is 2.2 pounds). The price of rice is supported by the government and therefore never becomes inflated. The family would also eat fresh and dry fish which varies in price but would run close to one won a kilo. Canned fish costs more, about 75 tsun for half a pound. Eggs are also plentiful and low in price. Vegetables are very cheap, especially the staple cabbage which is only a few tsun a kilo, while a wide variety of other vegetables might cost 25 to 50 tsun a kilo. Fruit is plentiful, especially apples at 25 tsun a kilo and peaches at 40 tsun. Other necessities, plus a few extras such as an occasional bottle of ginseng, the most popular alcoholic beverage at 3.5 won a bottle, would run the food bill to 3 won a day or about 50 percent of earnings. With what remains the family will have to buy clothing which runs from cheap to very expensive. For example, an undershirt costs about one won and a pair of children's pajamas nearly two; but a very attractive knitted suit for a child is priced at 21 won. Most Korean families own a sewing machine and make a large part of their clothing, thus realizing a considerable saving. As for recreation and services, these seem to be cheap, as is transportation. For the school children, uniforms, books and supplies are free. A very popular pastime for men seems to be the lady barbers who provide a shave and haircut for about 35 tsun. No wonder Korean men are uniformly neatly groomed.

Conditions of housing and diet in the rural areas are



also rapidly improving because the People's Republic has given high priority to raising the standards of the peasantry. At the Pong Dai Cooperative, which admittedly is one of the more successful farms, household incomes are already comparable to those of urban workers. As I traveled

TABLE 5

ESTIMATED MONTHLY BUDGET OF A FAMILY  
(Based on average income of 180 won)

Expenditures:	Amount	% of income
Rent & utilities	4	2
Food	90	50
Clothing & household	22	13
Recreational	10	5
Medical	0	0
Educational	0	0
TOTAL	126	70
savings for special purposes	54	30

through the villages of Korea, I acquired surprising but convincing proof that hunger has been erased throughout the land. In Pyongyang there are no dogs on the streets, for apartment buildings are not favorable to keeping such pets. But as soon as I went into the countryside or passed through smaller towns, I saw many dogs at leisure along the way. Every single dog that I saw was well nourished. From many grim remembrances of my visits to Mexico, I know that the condition of animals is a good gauge to the diet of the poorer half of the society. Needless to say, the dogs of the more affluent eat well; but the stray dogs or the dogs of the poorer villages are forced to compete with people for what little food is available. Many of these pitiful creatures haunt the eating places of Mexico, their bones protruding from hanging skins, their eyes running with sores, their bodies often too listless to move out of

the way of a passing car. The starving cows of India are another brutal reminder that hunger stalks the Third World. Not socialist Korea, however!

As we left Li's apartment we expressed our thanks and the hope that she would soon have her refrigerator, but her thoughts turned to more serious matters. She spoke the heart of Korea when she pleaded with us to convince the American people to leave her country alone. "We are one people. We want unity. Why does your country separate us? If the American people will support our right to independence, we can solve our own national problems." As we waved goodbye, we assured Li that we would continue our efforts to awaken Americans to the imperialist policy being conducted in their name. It was difficult for her to understand how our people could be so oblivious to their deeds after Vietnam and Korea. I for one did not have any adequate answer.

While the apartment we had just visited is small compared to the standards of middle class Americans, it represents a vast improvement over the living conditions known to most Koreans in the past. It is a fair judgment to say that in socialist Korea the mass of people are housed as well as any people in Asia, and far better than most. If one adds the social conditions which provide the total environment—the absence of anything resembling ghetto culture marked by cultural deprivation, crime, drug addiction, sexual abuse—then the apartments of Pyongyang offer better living standards than large sections of American cities like New York or Philadelphia.

Everywhere in the People's Republic, on its farms or in its cities, one has the sense of a decent society in which equality of goods, services and opportunities prevails. There is no wealthy class but everyone enjoys a certain richness of life. The stores are not lavish with luxuries but good foods are plentiful and everyone in the country is



decently clothed. Koreans have not been conditioned to conceive themselves as consumers whose lives are measured by the quantity, novelty and expense of their acquisitions. One can hope that their collective values will spare them such a fate in a more affluent future. For the present, there is a sense of energy and purpose as people move to their jobs or to their studies. It is a busy country, bursting with revolutionary fervor, for there is so much to be done. Within the revolution one can find an outlet for his human potential and at the same time enjoy a great sense of security, without fear of unemployment, inflation, exorbitant medical expenses, inability to afford education, or any of the violence associated with urban life in the capitalist world.

There can be no question that among the great accomplishments of the socialist regime is the creation of a society of law and order. At least since the time of Confucius and Plato it has been one of the dreams of philosophers to lay the rational basis for a society in which both law and justice prevail. Confucius leaned toward respect for all proper authority, while Plato would have liked men in authority who deserved respect for their wisdom. Not until more than two thousand years later did Marx and Lenin add the essential proviso that a just society is one that is moving unrelentingly in the direction of equality of all men. Socialism has already eliminated the exploitation inevitably arising from class society on the basis of one group owning and ruling while another group works and is ruled. In the future, as the cultural level of the masses of workers and peasants is raised, it will be the task of communism to eliminate all inequities stemming from one group performing a more valuable function in society than another. Respect for law will naturally prevail in a society which is democratic in the ultimate meaning of the word—economic and social

democracy which can only emanate from the end of class rule.

Evidences of a lawful society are plentiful in the DPRK. After only a day in the country I realized it was unnecessary to lock the hotel door when going out. It was not an easy adjustment, and so on occasion I would act like that most charming of the seven dwarfs, Dopey, thoughtlessly locking my door as if I were home in New York, and then in contradiction, realizing that I was in Pyongyang, leaving the key in the door as a sign that I was out. The entrance or the surrounding grounds of the hotel are not marked by any conspicuous signs of security. There are no doorman, no armed guard anywhere, no visible sign of any undue precaution. On each floor of the hotel there is a desk attendant, a young woman whose duty it is to supervise matters and to attend to the needs of the guests. Since hundreds of people are in and out, any good con-man from a Western city, and even an inept one, could easily penetrate the hotel to perform some misdeed, for these attendants have learned to relax on their job, to perform service rather than security.

As one walks through Pyongyang, the largest city in the DPRK, a city of one million people, there is hardly a policeman to be seen except for unarmed traffic officers at busy intersections. The absence of policemen is a reflection of a society fully employed and hard at work. During the daytime everyone seems to have a sense of purpose. They are going to work, to class, to shops or elsewhere to accomplish some other task. I do not mean to suggest that there is no leisure in the DPRK, for workers do have holidays and children have vacations from school and there are older retired people. But the country is clearly a nation of people hard at work. There are no beggars, no drifters, no parasitical rich. There is no lumpen proletariat cast into the role of the dregs of society, forced to seek illicit



means of support by petty crime, and that is for the simple reason that there is a job for everyone at relatively equal pay. There are also no blatantly corrupt financiers and political accomplices, characteristic of the capitalist world, to corrode the prevailing sense of justice. So far as I know Korea has no equivalent to Horatio Alger, but mottos like "hard work equals success" have more bearing in revolutionary Korea than they do in our own country.

For a people who display such a high morality, respecting one another as well as the public property, it is interesting to note how little a part religion plays. I did not meet a single religious person, though I suppose some do exist. In any case, the socialist constitution guarantees freedom of religious belief. But there are few churches anywhere, since most were destroyed by American bombing and never rebuilt. According to those I queried, Christianity (which was never widespread) was one of the casualties of the savage bombing for it was a Christian country that acted in the spirit of barbarian hordes, not only destroying the church buildings but also discrediting in the minds of Korean youth any claim that Christianity represented higher moral conduct. Buddhism once had a larger following than did Christianity, but it too is disappearing due to the scientific ideology that all the children learn as part of their education.

While industriousness, respect for law, and collective consciousness are prevalent, I do not mean to convey the impression that Korean society is a somber one. People relax from their work to enjoy themselves in many ways. There are movies, concerts and athletic events. While we were in Pyongyang an international track and field competition filled a huge stadium throughout a week, and our hotel bustled with athletes from China and Cuba. We also enjoyed a unique circus one evening along with thousands of workers. The Korean circus is a display of

grace, precision, balance and beauty, rather than feats of daring or a huge spectacle. It appeals equally to adults or children, and it is sprinkled with numerous intermissions which feature skits with a clear political content.

People enjoy themselves in many traditional ways, too. On a warm summer afternoon a group of men in a park were enjoying some flute music. Elsewhere, a group of working women had gathered their younger children from a nursery and were enjoying a long picnic lunch before returning to work. With carefree gaiety a few at a time performed folk dances which the others laughingly encouraged. Even when my companion Ante began to take pictures, to my surprise the dancers seemed spurred to a more lively performance for our benefit as well. For the one time during my visit Korean women shed all reserve in sheer enjoyment of what they were doing.

Aboard the plane on the return to Moscow it was my good fortune to sit next to Sok Jung Gun who was on his way to the International Youth Festival. What a surprise when he leaned over and asked in near-perfect English, "Are you an American?" It turned out that Sok was an advanced student at the Pyongyang Foreign Language College. Even more fortunate than his command of English, which helped us to while away the 12-hour flight, was his revolutionary background. Through Sok I received one more confirmation of the efficacy of cultural revolution. "Why is it that you are studying English?" I queried. With a ringing sincerity Sok explained that he had concentrated on English because, "When the southern half of our country is liberated, it will be useful. I want to help introduce *juche* ideas. What more useful way would there be to serve the revolution?"

All his life Sok had learned to serve the revolution so that it was as natural for him as breathing. When he was a very young child his father was killed during the Korean



War. "My last remembrance of him was telling my mother to raise the children well and to have faith in the revolution." Sok also recalls, although part of his remembrance he attributes to his mother's account, the bombing of his family home. "One day we were at home. The air raid warning sounded. We all rushed for the shelter, my hand in my mother's. Suddenly everything cracked around us as we were buried by ruins. But we were rescued by others and we survived."

His early education took place at the Haejoo Revolution School, a special school for the children of war heroes. Following the war the state took special care to see that war orphans were properly nourished and educated. It did not sound strained to hear Sok relate how Kim Il Sung, the country's leader, "took us into his bosom." Not only did he learn to love the revolution, but Sok was frank to explain, "We were inculcated with a strong sense of hatred for U.S. imperialism." I asked what he felt about me, an American. "You are our friend," he smiled. "I have heard of your Center and its anti-imperialism."

When I parted from Sok at the Moscow airport, whatever else we did not know about each other, certain things were clear. He hopes to carry the Korean Revolution forward during this generation, to see his country united under socialism. I hope to see the end of American imperialism. Both of us are working for the liberation of people and thus we felt a bond of humanity.

#### 4 NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND REUNIFICATION

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A pervasive feature of north Korean life is a strong sense of nationalism which is most strikingly expressed in the insistence on independence and in the struggle for unity of all the Korean people within one nation. Every country displays national spirit which emanates from attachment to the land and its culture, else it would cease to be a nation. But there is a far more intense expression of it in Korea than I have personally witnessed anywhere else, a nationalism which contains a dual sense of urgency and impending destiny. Part of this spirit emanates from the still youthful revolution, a transformation of material and cultural life which inspires a sense of dedication to its completion and a sense of confidence that just as Koreans have risen out of colonialism in one generation, so they will triumph over other obstacles tomorrow. Another part



of it is ideological, stemming from the Marxist-Leninist faith in people and their collective ability to create a more rational, more affluent and more just society.

No one in the DPRK speaks of nationalism *per se*, but rather of patriotism or love of country. In fact, officials will even deny the existence of any ideological nationalism, for they equate the term with bourgeois ideology whose nationalism is marked by chauvinism and imperialism. Obviously socialist Korea rejects all such nationalism which is the expression of the capitalist state. What they promote is an outlook consistent with proletarian rule, the ideology of proletarian internationalism which embraces the furtherance of a world socialism consisting of independent socialist states. Nevertheless, I prefer the term nationalism to describe what I saw, for I believe it communicates more simply, but I would add the emphasis that Korean "nationalism" aims at independence, liberation of all the Korean people from imperialism and capitalism, unity of the nation, development of the national culture—all the ideas fully encompassed within the term proletarian internationalism.

Everyone I talked with expressed an exuberant nationalism coupled with internationalism — that is, a pride in their country and its revolution, as well as its part in the world transition to socialism. Older people were still amazed at the great improvements compared to the past and justly proud of the contrast. "I no longer work for the landlord" was one common judgment among peasants, while the urban workers extolled the security they enjoy as well as the rising standard of living. Younger parents anticipate the future for their children with great confidence. "Do you see how healthy they look?" I was asked at a rural clinic. Again and again I was reminded of the educational opportunities universally available, the careers planned by the children, and the many new tech-

nical fields opened to both women and men by the industrializing society. Among the youth, students told me "I am studying faithfully to serve the revolution." At one of the factories a strong handsome mechanic named Kim Yong Sik typified the workers' spirit. Recognizing one of our delegation, Joe Brandt, who had toured the factory several years before, Kim exchanged a warm embrace with his American comrade. After a light-hearted but proud introduction to the improved machinery he was now operating, Kim turned serious. "All these machines we are producing are not for ourselves only. They are also for our compatriots in the south. One day we will be united with them."

Behind this expression of nationalism which comes through the people there is an extensive ideological and cultural preparation. Sometimes it takes very simple forms as when kindergarten children, gathered around a model of Kim Il Sung's birthplace, are told stories about his youthful sacrifices for the country. Each story conveys a moral lesson—devotion to Korea, resistance to oppression, compassion for workers and peasants who are the people, love of family—intended to shape a patriotic and socially responsible citizen. Many of the stories told of Kim are akin to those about George Washington who refused to tell a lie in order to evade responsibility for the misdeed of chopping down a cherry tree, or on a more nationalistic plane, the hardships endured by Washington and his revolutionary forces during the winter at Valley Forge. Just as Washington slept in many beds, all duly marked by historical citations, so Kim has sat in many chairs while giving "on the spot guidance" and these places have become honored sites. The stories of Kim's deeds are legendary with one for almost any occasion. Even adults are prone to tell these stories, indicative of how deeply the lessons have been planted. I recall my



guide plying me with tales of Kim Il Sung during our two-hour drive from Sinchon to Pyongyang. The guide's sincerity and enthusiasm for his tales were only matched by my patience as a good listener.

I do not mean to suggest that Korean nationalism is a modern product, a creation of the revolution. On the contrary, the revolution is a product of nationalism which was strengthened by colonial domination. At the Palace of National Culture which houses one of the great national art collections in the world I gained a deepened respect for the antiquity and beauty of Korean civilization. Wall paintings from royal tombs of the fourth century reminded me that the Korean people have had a national history for 2,000 years, since the days of the Han Empire in China and the first century of the Roman Empire. Probably for some 2,000 years prior to this recorded history Koreans had inhabited the area as scattered tribes, originally migrating across Manchuria to settle in the peninsula where they developed as a race with a national culture and language. Most of Korean history has been marked by political division or subjugation to more powerful neighbors. By modern times Korea was united under the Yi dynasty (1392-1910), a regime akin to feudal China with a landlord-mandarin bureaucracy controlling the peasant society. During these centuries Korea was a vassal state of the Chinese Empire, absorbing much of Chinese culture including Confucian philosophy and civil service, a classical tradition of art and literature, and Buddhism.

In the twentieth century the Korean people have experienced Japanese and American occupation. At the time that Manchu China was being dissected into spheres of influence by the Western powers, Korea was seized by a rapidly industrializing Japan which sought colonies to support its economic growth. World War II brought the Japanese occupation to an end, only to be succeeded by

American occupation of the southern part of the peninsula. Thus the struggle for national liberation is an ongoing process pointing toward the departure of foreign troops from south Korea (there are no foreign troops in the north) and a unified nation. The Palace of National Culture provides a symbol of the unity of the Korean people shaped by geography and history but torn asunder by imperialism.

A more spectacular symbol of nationalism is the huge Museum of the Revolution adorning Mansudae Hill on the fringe of Pyongyang. The museum and its imposing statuary provide a display of the component elements of Korean nationalism. At the front of the museum one is awed by a bronze statue of Kim Il Sung that stands more than 60 feet tall. Kim, after all, is the acknowledged leader of the revolution, the "beloved and respected leader" who has been proclaimed Father of the Country. Within the walls of the museum, in room after room, one can learn of his revolutionary deeds. On both sides of the statue there is a sculpture panorama which totals 228 figures paying homage to the people who formed the revolutionary forces. One side honors the anti-Japanese struggle; the other celebrates the creation of socialism. Various classes are depicted in their revolutionary roles: a group of peasants support the guerrilla struggle, workers are forging weapons, intellectuals are carrying the teachings of Marxism-Leninism to the people. Altogether they comprise the united front which made possible the anti-feudal, anti-colonial revolution. Especially marked for honor is the People's Revolutionary Army as in the scenes of the Battle of Pochonbo against the Japanese and during the Fatherland Liberation War against the United States. Women, too, have a pronounced role as fighters and workers. One carries a scroll bearing the Law on the Equality of Sexes. The people march under banners of



"Marxism-Leninism Will Be Victorious!" "Long Life to Kim Il Sung!" "Let's Crush U.S. Imperialism Everywhere in the World!" and "Long Live Proletarian Internationalism!"

Korean nationalism is expressed through *juche* which is a concept embracing independence and self-reliance. What it comes down to in practice is simply that the Korean people must make their revolution in their own manner. Kim Il Sung has put the matter in simple terms:

In a nutshell, the idea of *juche* means that the masters of the revolution are the masses of the people. They are also the motive force of the revolution and construction. In other words, it is an idea that one is responsible for one's own destiny and that one also has the capacity for hewing out one's own destiny.

Much of this emphasis on self-reliance is explicable by Korea's geographical and historical setting. Newly liberated from Japanese colonialism but still divided, there is a reason for the deep consciousness Koreans have of their encirclement by great states—the People's Republic of China, Japan, the Soviet Union, and the U.S. which has created its own base in the southern part of the country. While the socialist states of People's China and the USSR have taken a friendly, helpful attitude toward the DPRK, Korea has carefully avoided over-dependence on either of these great states even as it has maintained friendly relations with both.

In lengthy discussions with Professor Chang Hyok of Kim Il Sung University, I asked what distinction he would make between *juche* and nationalism. He explained that *juche* is part of a Marxist-Leninist view of the world, thus fully related to proletarian internationalism. "There is a world revolution for socialism," he said. "Each nation must make its own revolution, but every independent re-

volution is a contribution to a world socialism. *Juche* means making our revolution well, making a unique contribution to socialism, and thus strengthening the forces of proletarian internationalism." Ideologically, then, *juche* means the application of Marxism-Leninism to Korea's special needs, to its own national conditions that exist within the broader context of a world struggle between socialism and imperialism. Kim Il Sung himself has pointed out that, "Every Marxist-Leninist has this idea of *juche*. I have just laid special emphasis on the idea."

When it comes to implementation of *juche* Korea has worked out what seem to be unique ways. In the economic realm *juche* means utilizing a nation's own power, fuel, raw materials and technicians. The figure of 70 percent was cited as the measurement of *juche* industry. If 70 percent or more of all the basic ingredients entering production originate within the nation, then it qualifies as *juche* industry. Only then, I was told, can industry be independent. This goal toward an independent economy is totally compatible with a world socialist specialization of labor and equitable trade. It does not mean less trade among nations but, on the contrary, more trade because productivity is enriched when exploitation is eliminated. What it involves is each nation developing its productive capacity by a planned economy, state control of capital, elimination of class exploitation, and the growth of political consciousness among all the people. To a Third World beset by subsidiary and assembly industries which enrich the capitalist industrialized countries, and by plantation economies which relegate masses of peasants to poverty, the DPRK's way demonstrates that the application of socialist principles to eliminate the neo-colonial restrictions on an economy can rapidly overcome "underdevelopment" and lead to the best use of the nation's resources.



In the realm of the arts, great emphasis is placed on avoiding what Koreans call "flunkeyism" or the mechanical imitation of either traditional or foreign styles. Professor Chang Hyok insisted, "We cannot instill our people with patriotism if we rely on foreign art for either form or content. Nor can the use of mechanical models reach the hearts of working people as part of their patriotic education." What is essential is to create new forms of expression that communicate with ordinary people and to utilize these forms to depict the realities of the colonial past, the dynamics of the contemporary struggle, and the essential justice of the socialist future." Again I was inclined to agree with my hosts that at this point in history national liberation, including the creation of a working class culture utilizing whatever is uniquely national, is a necessary step toward a socialist future. On this matter Kim Il Sung has urged that the arts embody socialist values within a context that enhances the sense of national purpose.

Socialist patriotism and proletarian internationalism form an inseparable unity. . . . A person born in Korea has the duty to serve the revolution and build socialism and communism in Korea. The Korean revolution is an internationalist duty imposed on the Korean people. This means that the Korean people can fulfil their internationalist duty faithfully by carrying through the Korean revolution with high honor before anything else. We should all subordinate ourselves to the achievement of the Korean revolution. In particular, it is absolutely necessary for us to heighten our people's national pride because we are still at the stage where we have to carry through the national liberation revolution nationwide.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kim Il Sung: *On Revolutionary Literature and Arts* (Holland, 1972), pp. 81-82.

During our visit we found that the idea of *juche* sometimes takes exaggerated forms, as in the Sinchon Museum on the Korean War where our guide made no mention of the crucial role played by the Chinese army in driving an American-invading force back below the 38th parallel. When pressed by an inquiry on this point, the museum director politely acknowledged historical fact, but he reminded us the museum was to honor the Korean people. On other occasions when we raised the question of *juche's* applicability in the context of a war like Vietnam or in the face of a nuclear threat to a small state, it was admitted that "self-defense by no means negates the assistance of socialist states." At the same time, the Koreans correctly stressed the absolutely essential role of defending oneself as has been demonstrated by the Vietnamese people or any other successful revolutionary force. Who could deny the necessity of a people being prepared to defend itself in the face of aggression?

There were humorous aspects to *juche*, too, as in the Palace of National Culture where we took issue with the plastic representations of Kim Il Sung as painted by contemporary artists. Joe Brandt chided our hosts, though with a great deal of tact and warmth, regarding the efficacy of such works of art. What revolutionary hardened by four decades of struggle would not show a wrinkle on his face?! Where in such portraits is the depth of humanity that in fact Kim Il Sung possesses? A stream of esthetic questions flowed from the implication we had dropped that Korean art might remain national and still draw more extensively from the creativity of world art. Our genial and urbane host, the director of the museum Choi Hong Kap, cordially accepted our "capitalist" esthetics and with a knowing grin promised to take it up with the artists on Monday. These minor diversions, however, did not detract from the impression we gained that Korea's *juche*



is a necessary counteractive to a long colonial experience, most recently to the division of the Korean people by U.S. imperialism. To counter powerful imperialist forces and to propel a small, youthful socialist state toward greater strength, *juche* is a means of evoking collective revolutionary consciousness.

One of the clusters of statues that front the Museum of the Revolution depicts the people of south Korea defiantly resisting foreign oppression in the "sacred struggle" to unify the country and liberate it from foreign occupation. Needless to add, the culprit of that situation is the U.S. which today maintains 42,000 soldiers along with formidable air-naval power in Korea on the pretext of defending the "Free World." Shortly after the Japanese surrender in 1945, American forces occupied the southern half of the country to the 38th parallel, and a large force has remained there ever since. The American presence represents the determination of U.S. foreign policy to prevent the spread of socialism, whatever the wishes of the Korean people may be. A capitalist curtain has thus been clamped across the 38th parallel imposing a double tragedy on the Korean people. South Korea is a military dictatorship under martial law with an economy dominated by native capitalists linked closely with foreign capital, especially American and Japanese. Its land is highly concentrated, rendering a large portion of the peasants landless or subsistence tenants, thus enriching a landowning-capitalist class.<sup>2</sup> In addition to hardships suffered by the mass of south Koreans because of the per-

<sup>2</sup> A large number of dispossessed peasants have been forced to join the slum-dwellers of the cities where unemployment in 1971 ranged as high as 30 percent. Of those who remained on the land 20 percent are tenants while another one-third own less than 1.25 acres. See Gerhard Breidenstein, "Capitalism in South Korea," *Korea Focus*, Vol. II, No. 1 (January 1973), pp. 3-20.

petuation of a capitalist dictatorship supported by U.S. arms, the country is also cut into two as a result of Cold War policies.

The story of Korea's division goes back to the time of Japanese occupation. A Korean nationalist movement arose in protest against the colonial regime. Mass demonstrations occurred in Seoul and other cities on March 1, 1919 as hundreds of thousands of Koreans marched in the streets resulting in numerous clashes with the police. The toll of 500 killed and 27,000 arrested<sup>3</sup> indicates the extent of Japanese suppression but the bitterness evoked by these events only deepened nationalist resentments. Unfortunately for the Korean people no unified national movement was created but instead a variety of organizations representing class interests were formed. One such group consisted of overseas Koreans, many of them living in Shanghai, who proclaimed the Korean Provisional Government in April 1919. This organization played a leading role among bourgeois nationalists whose program envisioned a capitalist republic along the lines Chiang Kai-shek eventually set up in China. One of the leaders was Syngman Rhee who was to become the president of the American-sponsored Republic of Korea (south Korea) in 1948. Rhee was the perfect representative of the comprador bourgeoisie once U.S. power was established in Korea. Of a wealthy family, Rhee had converted to the Methodist faith. He attended George Washington University, Harvard, and finally Woodrow Wilson's Princeton where he received the Ph.D. degree in international law in 1910. After a short stay in Korea, from 1912 until the end of World War II he lived in Hawaii where he cultivated influential friends. For more than three decades he had

<sup>3</sup> Chong-Sik Lee: *The Politics of Korean Nationalism* (University of California Press, 1963), p. 114.



not seen Korea when he became president of the southern part.

There was also a Communist-oriented nationalist movement which included a small underground organization in the cities and dispersed guerrilla bases in the northern mountains of Korea and in Manchuria where nearly a million Koreans were settled. Some of the Korean guerrillas joined the Chinese Communists at Yen-an, while others fled to the Soviet Union, but the bulk remained in Manchuria. When the Japanese moved into Manchuria in 1931, Korean guerrillas expanded their activities, even striking deep into Korean territory. By the mid-1930's Kim Il Sung was one of the important young leaders of the guerrilla movement in Manchuria.

Born in 1912 in the village of Mangyongdae, about 12 miles from Pyongyang, Kim's roots fashioned him for national leadership. He was raised amidst peasants which kept him close to the people and deeply aware of their exploitation. He was inspired by the nationalist activities of his family. His father was Kim Hyong Jik, founder of the underground Korean People's Association in 1917. For this the elder Kim was arrested and after the suppressed March 1 uprising he decided to move his family to safer quarters in Manchuria.

Kim Il Sung followed in his father's footsteps, engaging in nationalist activities as a teenager while suffering arrest and torture. In 1931 he joined the Communist Party, and the following year he helped to organize a guerrilla unit of young peasant-workers centering at Mount Paekdu-san in the Korean-Manchurian border region. It was a favorable area to launch a war for national liberation since 80 percent of the inhabitants were poor Korean peasants who had fled Japanese oppression, and the region was also protected by steep mountains spotted with thick forests. For the next three years the Paekdu-san guerrillas fought

to liberate the surrounding area. In 1935 the guerrillas decided to move farther north into Manchuria where they organized the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. Though the Japanese sent a large army in 1938-1939 to encircle and destroy the People's Army, a flight to north-east Korea preserved the revolutionary force. During World War II the People's Army continued raids on the Japanese and in August, 1945 collaborated with the Soviet forces to defeat the Japanese.<sup>4</sup> Thus Kim Il Sung and his armed comrades were in a favorable position to capitalize on the Soviet liberation.

The revolutionary forces, during those long years in the forests and mountains of the border areas, had been themselves the future state in embryo, developing policies and carrying out reforms wherever they operated. This was a key factor in the speed with which the government of Kim Il Sung was established and consolidated in Pyongyang, and a whole series of revolutionary measures introduced, accepted and supported by the overwhelming majority of Korean workers, peasants, progressive intellectuals and most of the urban middle class.<sup>5</sup>

Dae-sook Suh, who has studied the origins of the Communist movement, also cites the importance of the long patriotic struggle waged by the Communists by which they succeeded in wresting control of the revolution for national liberation:

They planted a deep core of Communist influence among the Korean people, particularly the students, youth groups, laborers and peasants. Their fortitude

<sup>4</sup> Details are provided in the *Brief History of the Revolutionary Activities of Comrade Kim Il Sung* (Pyongyang, 1969).

<sup>5</sup> Wilfred Burchett: *Again Korea* (International Publishers, 1968), pp. 99-100.



and, at times, obstinate determination to succeed had a profound influence on Korean intellectuals and writers. To older Koreans, who had groveled so long before seemingly endless foreign suppression, communism seemed a new hope or a magic torch from which they hoped to gain revolutionary strength.<sup>6</sup>

During the Allied conferences of World War II no specific agreements were made regarding Korea. The most relevant settlement, as it turned out, was the Yalta provision that the Soviet Union would enter the war against Japan three months after the end of fighting in Europe. Fulfilling this commitment, the Soviet army entered Korea on August 8, 1945 and, aided by the Korean People's Army, by mid-August had accomplished the liberation of Korea. The American army was at Okinawa, but on August 14 President Truman issued General Order Number 1 which proclaimed the 38th parallel as a dividing line in Korea, American troops to occupy the area south of that line. It was sheer power politics, an attempt "to redefine the distribution of power throughout the entire Far East . . . to avoid political defeat in the wake of war and to counter the Resistance in Asia." Not only did the U.S. oppose Soviet liberation of the peninsula, but the General Order forbade the Japanese to surrender to Korean resistance groups.<sup>7</sup> The Soviet forces, however, welcomed Korean revolutionaries who were ready to assume authority. People's committees were formed throughout the country, and by the end of August there were 145 of them both north and south of the 38th parallel. On September 6 at Seoul a national congress of these committees proclaimed a Korean People's Republic, electing a Central People's Committee as the new government.

<sup>6</sup> Dae-sook Suh: *The Korean Communist Movement, 1918-1948* (Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 132.

<sup>7</sup> Gabriel Kolko: *The Politics of War* (Random House, 1969), pp. 600-602.

When American soldiers landed in Korea on September 8, the commanding General Hodge refused to have anything to do with the People's Committees or the People's Republic even though they were the "indigenous Korean political, economic, and administrative organs."<sup>8</sup> Instead, Hodge rounded up some well-known Korean collaborators to represent the Korean people, restored the Japanese administration, and rearmed Japanese soldiers to repress nationalist efforts for independence. Exiled bourgeois Koreans were also summoned, including Rhee who was welcomed as a national hero at a rally promoted by U.S. authorities. Rhee reciprocated for this reception with a virulent anti-Soviet speech, indicative of the role he would play. "It was no secret that the U.S. favored the right"—that is, politicians who were conservative, pro-capitalist, and generally former collaborators with the Japanese.<sup>9</sup> While declaring illegal the People's Republic of Korea, the U.S. created what was called the Representative Democratic Council with Rhee as chairman and "dominated by former Provisional Government members and extreme conservatives."<sup>10</sup> Thus, U.S. policy deliberately repressed popular desires for a unified Korea in favor of a satellite which could serve as a base for anti-communist operations. "The division of Korea was an American putsch,"<sup>11</sup> and the American army has re-

<sup>8</sup> Mark J. Scher, "U.S. Policy in Korea 1945-1948: a Neo-Colonial Model Takes Shape," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, Vol. V, No. 4 (December, 1973), pp. 17-27.

<sup>9</sup> Bertram D. Sarafan, "Military Government: Korea," *Far Eastern Survey* (November, 1946), p. 350.

<sup>10</sup> George McCune: *Korea Today* (Harvard University Press, 1950), p. 75.

<sup>11</sup> Jon Halliday, "The Korean Revolution," *Socialist Revolution*, Vol. I, No. 6 (November, 1970), pp. 95-133.



mained in Korea from 1945 until the present to preserve the misdeed.

The refusal of the United States to allow democratic and revolutionary forces a political role made agreement with the Soviet Union impossible and thwarted the rights of the Korean people to an independent unified country. Korea became divided into two states as each of the occupying powers fostered a state in its own image. In north Korea a Central People's Committee was elected by the local people's committees in February, 1946 and Kim Il Sung was chosen as president. Kim was thus rewarded for his revolutionary role up to 1945 and for his tireless efforts to unify the revolutionary groups from Yenan, Manchuria and Korea.<sup>12</sup> With Soviet support the People's Committee laid the basis for a socialist country. Industry (more than 95 percent of which had been Japanese-owned) was nationalized and in 1947 the first of a series of economic plans was begun, aided by a long-term loan from the Soviet Union of 212 million rubles. By 1949 industrial production was more than four times greater than it had been in 1946.<sup>13</sup> Land reform was carried out in 1946 by the expropriation of land belonging to Japanese and to Korean absentee landlords. Other landlords who owned more than 5 chongbos (a chongbo is 2.45 acres) had the excess confiscated. By the distribution of this land to the poor and landless peasants, about one-third of the north's population of 9 million was raised out of dire poverty into near equality with the most prosperous peasants. Not only

<sup>12</sup> Halliday pointedly comments: "The Western picture of Kim catapulted into power by the Russians is false." *Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>13</sup> Yoon T. Kuark, "North Korea's Industrial Development during the Post-War Period," in Scalapino: *North Korea Today* p. 52, p. 61.

was the basis for peasant democracy laid, but agricultural production showed rapid progress up to 1950.<sup>14</sup>

Meantime in the south, where more than half of the peasants were landless tenants, a landlord-comprador capitalist regime was being fostered. To provide a democratic facade for the class dictatorship it was establishing, in 1948 the U.S. insisted on elections which brought the Rhee government to power. Though the elections were not a free expression of the Korean people's will—aside from the fighting during the campaign, there was massive coercion at the polls with more than 500 people killed; in addition a whole mass of poor people deemed "illiterates" were denied the right to vote<sup>15</sup>—the U.S. and the United Nations confirmed the results which led to the establishment of the Republic of (South) Korea, a government of "landlords and members of the old aristocracy."<sup>16</sup> The United Nations was used by the U.S. to legitimize its creation of a puppet state. Under urging from John Foster Dulles, a United Nations temporary Commission on Korea had been established with representatives from El Salvador, the Philippines, Syria, India and of course the U.S. It was a commission hardly interested in political democracy, much less in the land needs of the Korean peasantry. Yet it was members of this commission who served as scattered observers and deemed the election a fair one, even though "every single important politician active in the South, with the sole exception of Rhee, opposed the decision to call an election in the South alone."<sup>17</sup>

Simultaneous with the electoral campaign in the south,

<sup>14</sup> Kuark, p. 83.

<sup>15</sup> George McCune, pp. 229-230.

<sup>16</sup> W. D. Reeve: *The Republic of Korea* (Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 31.

<sup>17</sup> Halliday, p. 110.



a pan-Korean conference was held at Pyongyang in April, 1948 with 240 delegates from the south representing every important organization. "The South Korean delegates included nearly every man of eminence in the country except Dr. Rhee."<sup>18</sup> The great majority of Koreans wanted a unified country, independent of foreign domination, and not the establishment of a southern puppet state which would serve as an instrument of the U.S. in a cold war. The Pyongyang Conference denounced the separate election planned in the south and called for its boycott, supporting instead the idea of a single election for all of Korea. With virtually all the nationalist forces in the country represented, "The conference in Pyongyang shows irrefutably the links between the Communist and Nationalist movements . . . thirty-one months after the arrival of United States imperialism, Communist policy had the support of the mass of Koreans."<sup>19</sup> A few months later, after the Republic of Korea had been established in the south, at Pyongyang in September, 1948 the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was proclaimed as the legitimate representative of all the Korean people.

While the north created a popular regime backed by the peasants and workers—distributing land, increasing production, legalizing the equality of women, and creating a literate citizenry<sup>20</sup>—in the south the Rhee government "was so unpopular as to make its ability to survive doubt-

<sup>18</sup> John Gunther: *The Riddle of MacArthur* (Harper, 1951), p. 170. See also George McCune, p. 263.

<sup>19</sup> Halliday, p. 111.

<sup>20</sup> Key P. Yang & Chang-boh Chee, "North Korean Educational System," in Scalapino, p. 127. "Within a few years after the Second World War, North Korea successfully eradicated illiteracy."

ful."<sup>21</sup> Two rebellions occurred in south Korea in 1948, one at Cheju Do in April and a larger one in October when army units seized the cities of Yosu and Suncheon where revolutionary people's committees were set up. When the Rhee government suppressed these uprisings, according to a report by the United Nations Commission more than 23,000 people were arrested, 80 percent of whom were imprisoned or executed.<sup>22</sup> Police brutality, arrests and political purges marked the aftermath of this abortive revolution, but this repression did not enhance the popular support of the regime. In May, 1950 when elections were held for the Assembly, despite the arrest of many opposition candidates, Rhee's supporters took a decisive beating with only 12 elected to the 210-seat chamber. "The regime was left tottering by lack of confidence both in Korea and abroad."<sup>23</sup>

It was the sharp contrast between the north and the south which precipitated the Korean War in June, 1950. While the north enjoyed an orderly, progressive and popular regime, the system in south Korea was unstable and repressive because it was at war with its own people. The government of south Korea was near its demise, in a condition strikingly similar to that of the south Vietnamese government in 1964 when the U.S. unleashed a massive air war against the Democratic Republic of (north) Vietnam. In both cases the U.S. opted for war as a desperate means of choking social revolution. While the guerrilla structure and support necessary for a People's War was not as extensive in Korea as in the 1960's in

<sup>21</sup> David Horowitz: *The Free World Colossus* (Hill & Wang, 1971), p. 118.

<sup>22</sup> Reeve, p. 32.

<sup>23</sup> U.S. News and World Report, July 7, 1950. Cited in Horowitz, p. 120. See also Reeve, p. 32.



Vietnam, there was in 1950 another important factor which weighed the scales toward U.S. intervention. In 1949 the Chinese Communist Revolution had succeeded in driving the American-backed forces of Chiang Kai-shek off the mainland, a great "loss" to "the Free World" which brought a renewed determination in U.S. policy to contain Communism in Asia. Representative of the switch to a more aggressive policy was John Foster Dulles who drew the lesson that future "disasters" like the Chinese Revolution could be prevented "if at some doubtful point we quickly take a dramatic and strong stand that shows our confidence and resolution," even to "risk war."<sup>24</sup>

That dramatic stand came in June of 1950 when the United States used its naval and air forces to assist south Korea in a war against the north. Much mythology and confusion surrounds the origins of the Korean War because until post-Vietnam years American historians abandoned their critical judgment in favor of apologetics, simply repeating the assertions made by the U.S. government and the press. According to that Cold War view, north Korea was guilty of an unprovoked act of aggression against an independent nation in south Korea. Hence the massive destructive power of the U.S. military was portrayed as a disinterested moral force, something of a guardian angel watching over freedom and independence. Behind the cliché of "the Free World" was obscured the right of the Korean people to further their own welfare by a revolution against an oppressive regime of capitalism in

<sup>24</sup> John Foster Dulles, Memorandum of May 18, 1950. Cited in Gabriel Kolko: *The Roots of American Foreign Policy* (Beacon Press, 1969), p. 96.

the South and to reunify a nation.<sup>25</sup> American historians and cold war apologists have failed to ask the most obvious questions, just as they failed for a long time regarding Vietnam. Is the right of revolution the supreme right of any people, as Jefferson once asserted? Did the Korean people have the right to liberate themselves from a dictatorship foisted upon them by foreign imperialism? Was Korea really two nations or one? What right did the U.S. have to shape the society of Korea along capitalist lines? Was the might of U.S. armed intervention founded in any moral or legal right?<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> In his reports on the war in late 1950, MacArthur stated that "at present, nearly 30 percent of the U.N. troops in Korea are employed against [guerrillas]. . . . From 1 to 21 November . . . there were nearly 200 guerrilla raids and attacks . . . led by professional leaders, many of whom had extensive prewar guerrilla experience. Guerrilla forces now total 30,000 to 35,000 in strength." Cited in Samuel B. Griffith: *The Chinese People's Liberation Army* (McGraw Hill, 1968) pp. 154-155.

<sup>26</sup> Jon Halliday has sensibly criticized bourgeois legalism concerned with the question of who fired the first shot. Korea must be understood as "a revolutionary war of national liberation" and a counter-revolution led by the U.S., not as an invasion of one country by another. To pose the question in the legalistic way of who began the border invasion is to subscribe to U.S. cold war claims that there was a free south Korea or a free South Vietnam and that the U.S. is a righteous defender of this freedom. It overlooks the occupation and foreign division of these lands and the right of the people to defend their lands against such foreign aggression. By failing to make class distinctions in assessing revolutionary conflicts, bourgeois scholarship becomes apologetics for capitalism even as it clings to its myth of objectivity. See Halliday, *op. cit.* Also "What Happened in Korea? Rethinking Korean History 1945-1953," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, Vol. V, No. 3 (November, 1973), pp. 36-43.



What was critical to the start of the war was the imminent collapse of south Korea as a U.S. dependency, another "loss" to the Free (capitalist) World like China, the spread of national liberation among the former colonial areas. At the very moment the U.S. was embarking on a war against the Korean people, it was increasing military aid to the French colonialists in Indochina as well as to Chiang's forces in Taiwan. By intervening once again in the civil war in China—for Taiwan was a recognized part of China subject to the only legitimate government in China, the People's Republic—the U.S. was opposing a government that many members of the United Nations already recognized as the only government of the Chinese people. Thus the U.S. was violating principles of national sovereignty even as it claimed to be defending them in Korea. To further shatter U.S. moralizing, while claiming self-determination for the Korean people, the U.S. was supporting a colonial regime's war against the Vietnamese people and was embarking on a war to defend an exploitative south Korean dictatorship, perhaps even extend its control to the north. What motivated the U.S. was made clear by President Truman in a statement on June 27, 1950:

The attack upon Korea makes it plain beyond all doubt that Communism has passed beyond the use of subversion to conquer independent nations and will now use armed invasion and war.

For Truman and the U.S. government all communism stood condemned for it stood against capitalism which was equated with freedom. What remained was to enlist United Nations support for a war to restore Korea, Indochina, possibly even China to "the Free World."

One of the reasons that the Korean War has not been subjected to critical examination is that the military ac-

tions taken by the U.S. were quickly sanctioned by the Security Council of the United Nations in a 7-1 vote. While this decision was taken by an international organization, it was far from a body sympathetic to the idea of social revolution. On the contrary, the Western powers had a built-in majority which is evidenced by the vote. Voting for the resolution endorsing U.S. military action were the U.S., England, France, Nationalist China (Chiang Kai-shek's Taiwan), Cuba (Batista's, not Fidel's!), Ecuador and Norway. All of these nations were dependent on the U.S. for economic aid and were military allies in NATO or receiving military aid from the U.S. The only Third World countries on the Council, India and Egypt, abstained, while Yugoslavia voted against the resolution, favoring an examination of the north Korean case. Unfortunately the Soviet Union was not present at the meeting or it would have been able to veto the decision. It should also be noted that the vote cast by Chiang Kai-shek properly belonged to the People's Republic of China which also should have possessed veto power. Not only was the non-communist West in command of the Security Council but it also dominated the General Assembly. In 1950 there were practically no independent nations from Africa and few from Asia with seats in the Assembly, while the Latin American countries were too dependent on the U.S. to act freely. Thus the United Nations entered a war to further the aims of U.S. and Western imperialism. This fact is confirmed by a look at the countries which rendered military assistance to the UN-US cause, fifteen in all. They were almost all part of the NATO alliance or British Empire partners: Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Canada, France, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Greece and Turkey. Ethiopia was the only other state from Africa, while three U.S. satellites—Colombia, Thailand and the Philippines—completed the



roll. It was clearly not an international lineup concerned with furthering national liberation.

While the war was waged under the UN banner, it was an American war fought by American soldiers in conjunction with the south Korean army. General MacArthur was named commander of the UN forces but he remained under direct orders from the president of the United States. The north Korean army had gained control of most of the peninsula when a large American force landed at Inchon in mid-September, forcing the north Korean army to withdraw north of the 38th parallel. The UN objective was thus achieved, but on October 1 MacArthur ordered UN forces, largely south Koreans under U.S. officers, across the parallel. MacArthur was pursuing a course of "liberating" north Korea from communism, even if this meant war with China. Without any authorization from the UN, MacArthur demanded unconditional surrender while the U.S. air force devastated north Korea. China warned that it would intervene to preserve north Korea, but the U.S. pushed through a United Nations resolution authorizing the invasion. With American armies rushing northward, China was invited to send a representative to the United Nations for peace talks. The very date of that meeting, November 24, MacArthur launched a 100,000 man offensive toward the Yalu River, a move aimed at preventing peace and provoking China to enter the war.<sup>27</sup> Two days later large Chinese armies entered the fighting, driving the Americans back below the parallel by the end of 1950.

Chinese entrance into the war created a stalemate, but

<sup>27</sup> See Horowitz, 133. Also D. F. Fleming: *The Cold War and Its Origins* (Allan & Unwin, 1961), p. 622. Even McGeorge Bundy writing in *The Reporter* called MacArthur's move deliberate "provocation." A decade later Bundy was one of the strong supporters of Johnsonian provocation of North Vietnam.

peace negotiations which began in July, 1951 dragged on for two years until the armistice was signed July 27, 1953. Three years of fighting resulted in more than 2,000,000 soldiers killed and wounded. An equally terrible toll of more than 1,000,000 civilians resulted from the massive air raids by U.S. bombers. North Korea was "a country totally devastated—the prototype of devastation in north Vietnam by the terrifying, indiscriminate and unrestricted use of U.S. air power. Not a city, village, factory, school, hospital or pagoda was left intact."<sup>28</sup> Bombs and napalm were dropped on Koreans by the hundreds of thousands of tons, all in the name of the United Nations and a "Free World!" In view of the later atrocity committed by the U.S. against Vietnam, it is important to clarify that the Korean precedent was deliberate barbarity, the attempt to crush a people's movement by saturation bombing. General Emmett O'Donnell, commander of the U.S. bombers during the first six months of the war, testified before a congressional committee that it was his early hope to "go to work on burning five major cities in north Korea to the ground," but that his O'Donnell Plan was postponed. "We did it all later, anyhow. . . . I would say that the entire, almost the entire Korean Peninsula is just a terrible mess. Everything is destroyed. There is nothing standing worthy of the name. . . . Just before the Chinese came in we were grounded. There were no more targets in Korea."<sup>29</sup>

While the Korean War is something of a distant memory to Americans, the nature of that war left an indelible mark on Korean minds. Not only were their young men sacrificed in combat but the whole civilian population was fair game. For north Koreans, Sinchon County has become

<sup>28</sup> Burchett, p. 7.

<sup>29</sup> Cited in I. F. Stone: *The Hidden History of the Korean War* (Monthly Review Press, 1970), p. 212.



the symbol of the enormous atrocity of that war. During two months in 1950 Sinchon was occupied by south Korean and American forces. A grisly monument, the Museum of the Korean War, records how 35,000 civilians perished in this county alone. Among other barbaric acts, the Worker's Party leadership numbering into the hundreds was packed into the cellar of what is now the museum, to be burned by gasoline poured across the floor and ignited. On the walls of that crematory one can see the last desperate scratches of fingernails, an anguished plea for lost humanity. The grim catalogue of similar atrocities contained in the museum left me weary after a visit of several hours. I was already laden with the guilt of the My Lais in Vietnam, and now this new weight of a war I did not so vividly remember came home to my moral consciousness.

Though the people of Korea want to unify their country, they do not want a repeat of 1950. Too much is at stake—the security of a whole generation and all that they have built since 1953. In all the proposals offered by the DPRK leadership, as well as in conversations with ordinary people, the stress is always on peaceful reunification. From the standpoint of the People's Republic the steps toward unity require that U.S. forces withdraw from south Korea (there are no foreign soldiers in the North); that the armed forces of both sides be reduced to 100,000 or fewer; that a wide range of exchanges begin between north and south, ending the total separation which has existed for a whole generation; and that a democratically chosen central government assume some power over all of Korea, or if that is not immediately possible, a north-south confederation be established as a transitional stage toward unification. These are very reasonable proposals containing nothing that could endanger the interests of the people in south Korea. It is well to remember that the population in

the south is more than twice as large as that in the north, about 35 million compared to 15. In a unified democratic Korea the will of the people of the south would play a decisive role.

A hopeful step occurred July 4, 1972 when secret talks between the north and south culminated in a public agreement regarding unification of Korea. Three principles were announced:

- (1) Reunification should be achieved independently, without reliance upon outside forces.
- (2) Peaceful means should be used.
- (3) National unity should have priority despite the different social systems in the two parts of the country.

In spite of this seeming agreement south Korea has continued to insist on the U.S. forces remaining, and it is seeking simultaneous admission to the United Nations of two Koreas, an apparent recognition of the permanent division of the country.

The obstacles to Korean unity are very great, for one part of the country is socialist and the other capitalist. In the capitalist south a massive amount of foreign capital investment, somewhere between three and four billion dollars, represents the stake that both the U.S. and Japan have in continued division of the country in order to keep the south a neo-colonial area and an armed base of "the Free World." The south Korean government represents the interests of this capital as well as the interests of Koreans whose capital is intertwined with that of world capitalism. What promises of working toward independence and unity can be credible from such a government?

Yet, while these formidable obstacles do exist, the depth of national sentiment among the Korean people is also a powerful reality. Given the existence of a strong



independent state in the north, the people of the south could never forget what is possible for a unified Korea. Furthermore, the socialist part of Korea has demonstrated that an industrial economy supported by collective agriculture makes possible cultural regeneration. The People's Republic of Korea has demonstrated for all the world to see that there are no backward peoples, only backward societies. Once cast off the colonial and neo-colonial shackles on a people's capacity to build, and what things are not possible? The people of the south part of Korea are bound to be stirred by such a vision, their revolutionary sentiments awakened again and strengthened.

The victory of the revolutionary forces in Vietnam and Cambodia has encouraged a resurgence of the liberation struggle in south Korea, for it has demonstrated clearly that even the enormous military power of the U.S. cannot hold back national liberation. Again Korea has been pushed to the forefront by events in Asia, for division of that country because of occupation of its soil by U.S. forces is one of the oldest residues of the Cold War. Failure of U.S. imperialism in Indochina has turned world attention to the plight of a divided and occupied Korea, but it has also led U.S. policymakers to designate Korea as a proof of their staying power in Asia.

The post-Indochina era is therefore one of great promise and great danger for the Korean people. All the material accomplishments of a generation of work and sacrifice are imperiled by the threat of war but hope is also deepened that unity is near. As the forces of socialism and national liberation grow stronger, there is a possibility that detente may become an increasing reality, with its blessings extended to Korea. At the same time, there is terrible danger that the U.S. may recklessly flaunt its military power in a desperate attempt to disprove its defeat in Indochina. That

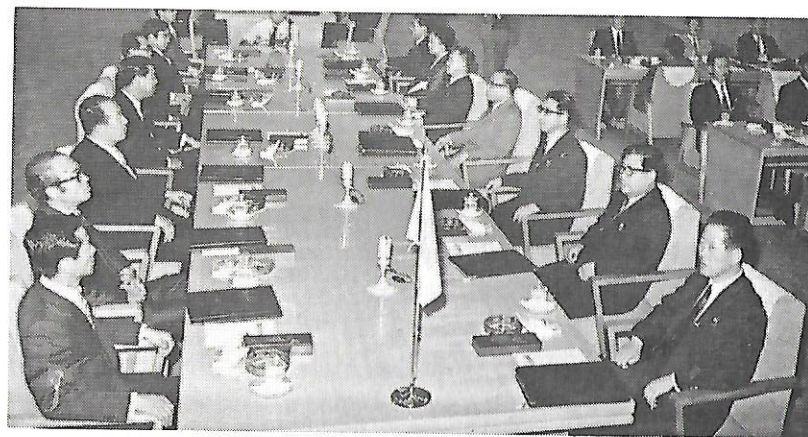


▲ At the North-South Co-ordination Commission Session, Pyongyang, 1973. Pak Sung Chul, Vice-Premier of the DPRK is seated at the center on the left side of the table

Mangyongdae National Park, the area of President Kim Il Sung's birthplace. The river is the Taedong where the U.S.S. General Sherman was sunk in 1866 (see p. 60).



▼ At the formal talks between the representatives of the north and south Red Cross Societies, Pyongyang, 1973





defeat was real enough, but it was not due to inability to wreak destruction, and that same destructive capacity can be unleashed at any time, as the Mayaguez attack on Cambodia demonstrates. While the U.S. can destroy virtually anything it chooses, it is sharply limited in its ability to shape the political and social future of the world.

It is up to us, the American people, to fully digest the lessons of the Vietnam War and of the more distant Korean War and to place brakes on our country's military activity. It is not in our interest to occupy and divide Korea; it is not in our interest to foist a military dictatorship upon south Korea so that a neo-colonial system can be preserved. We must be especially on our guard not to be duped again by the false cry of an invasion from the north! Vietnam and the Korean War have made a terrible mockery of that imperialist shibboleth. Our genuine interest is to aid in healing the divisions and scars of war because that is the way toward peace.

As we left the Democratic People's Republic of Korea the last words spoken to us were a plea, one that we had heard time and again during our journey. "Please continue to work hard for the removal of American soldiers from our soil. Then we will be able to work out our own problems." Remembering the enormous destruction wrought by U.S. military power in Korea during the 1950's and the more recent horrors inflicted upon the Vietnamese, could we do any less for Koreans and for ourselves?



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